



# messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 27 – Number 8

December 2009

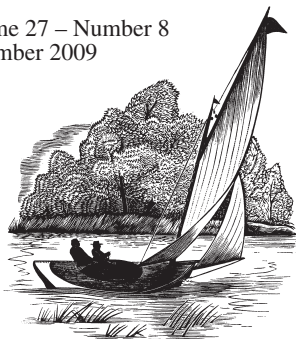
**Special Features This Issue**  
“Celebrating Phil Bolger’s Life on the Water”  
“27th Annual Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival”  
“A Californian Does the Texas 200”  
“A Shortened Sportboat” – “Clammin’ with George”



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## Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



This issue completes our first full year of publishing in the new economic reality we all now face. Despite ongoing fatuous statements from various officials that a recovery is underway, it is pretty apparent that there will be no recovery to the level of the debt-fueled consumption orgy of the past dozen years and that we all will be adjusting to the new sustainable economic status that much reduced financial resources will support.

I am pleased to report that *MAIB* has not been seriously impacted by all this. Our main financial support (75% of income) is from subscribers, not advertisers, and so we did not suffer the disappearance of pages and pages of flashy ads that has happened to the publications more consumer-oriented than we are. The low budget operation we have has positioned us nicely to face the new economic reality. We have always been there anyway!

What has been impacting us now for a decade is a slow erosion of our subscriber base. Despite an average renewal rate of about 75% (which is considered outstanding in this business), we have been unable to attract enough new subscribers to replace all those who do not renew. Thus there is a slow net decline in subscriber support.

In response to suggestions offered because of my remarks about this situation in bygone issues we have tried some new (for us) things to attract new readers. Chief amongst these was updating our website to hopefully reach further out there in internet land. Despite a significant number of "hits" that I am told we receive, the result has not been impressive, a trickle of requests for the free sample copy we offer and a few trial subscription orders supplement a handful of full subscription orders we receive each month. It is obvious to me that the internet is not much of a marketing medium for us.

Some readers with backgrounds in marketing have also tried to be helpful but here they run into some of my contrary convictions. Offering cut-price subscriptions is not a go, we are already at a rate that just about sustains us. Offering trinkets such as coffee cups as incentives, aside from being unaffordable, runs afoul of my conviction that the magazine has got to be attractive enough to someone to want

it for what it is and not because it can be gotten cheap or with added doodads.

I conclude from all this that what we offer appeals to only a certain few folks and there is only a limited number of them out there. It is very rewarding to know that over 3,000 of you continue to be loyal subscribers and the notes that so many of you write on your renewals convince me that what we offer has real meaning to you and is valued enough to keep you coming back.

One way of reaching out annually has been our soliciting from those of you who are true believers gift subscription orders for persons you think might enjoy the magazine. The opposite page is our annual appeal for such orders, and about 10% of our readership are recipients of such gifts. To all of you who participate in this (who will soon be receiving the renewal order forms to continue the gifts for another year) we say thank you so much for your support.

Building up our readership towards the 4,000 it was a dozen years ago would go far towards supporting us directly, as the economies of scale (even on so small a level) do result in more of the income ending up supporting us directly. Jane and I are at the end of the payoff line behind the printer, the post office and the production and operational costs. Our net income from the magazine may not be enough to live on (it supplements our Social Security) but when regarded as a retirement income it is earned at a much more rewarding job than bagging groceries in the supermarket.

So, I invite you to again consider ordering a gift subscription(s) again this year for a person(s) you think might enjoy the magazine. Should the person(s) you bestow the gift(s) upon already subscribe, we will extend their subscription(s) for another year with your compliments.

I intend to carry on publishing the magazine as long as enough of you wish to receive it to make it financially feasible. In May we start our 28<sup>th</sup> year which is, I think, evidence of our commitment to what we do. We do love what we do and those of you who love what we do can help us carry on for a modest investment and introduce *MAIB* to another who might share your enjoyment.

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## On the Cover...

Several of Phil Bolger's designs at anchor in front of his home on the Jones River in West Gloucester, Massachusetts, while participating in the Memorial Event organized by his widow, Susanne Altenberger, mid-September. Rob Gogan brings us a full report on this gathering in this issue.

# Give Christmas Gift Subscriptions to your friends who mess about in boats...

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# You write to us about...

## Adventures & Experiences...

### What a Great Time We Had!

On September 13, 18 of our members and friends in ten canoes paddled the Kennebec River from Skowhegan to Hinkley. The river is wide and calm on this stretch, but moving our way, so we enjoyed a lot of socializing. We took a lunch break in a cove with a dock but no camp, a nice spot. Some saw an eagle. There was no rain until we were loading up the canoes at the end of the trip. What a great time we had.

Bob Bassett, Vienna, ME



### Greetings from Greenland

On my most recent trip to Greenland I got the opportunity to sit between the pilots of the D-7 and photograph the approach to Upernavik. This was such a delight to actually see what it is like to land that airplane and to see all those details one cannot see otherwise of the islands and all the rocks.

While here, I paddled into an area called Ammarqua along the south side of Nutarmiut Island. It was very nice weather for paddling, every day the sun was bright and the only wind was coming from the glacier out into the warm areas. I even got to paddle at 1am because I wanted to make a crossing without much wind in Sortehule.

When I first got here I picked up my boat, which I had stored at Martin Hjort's house with other equipment, and took it down to the old harbor. The next day a nasty windstorm came in so I just hung out, visited the police to tell them what I was up to, and got a weather report printout via Weather Underground which showed the wind strengths and time of day for those strengths from the police. I noticed that there was going to be a quiet time starting at midnight. With the window of quiet time in mind I put my boat together and launched at 4am.

Paddling was challenging because I had light wind and some waves in my face almost the whole way. I met a couple of motorboats coming from the opposite way. I made the mistake of paddling far enough out from the rocks so that paddling was quite boring because I had no sense of seeing change as I was paddling along. On the way back I made it a point not to do that again and the trip was much more interesting because I could look at the details in the rocks and enjoy them.

In this far northern latitude in bright sun there is what is called a refractory atmosphere. Everything far away is magnified so that it looks like it is just over there. I had some very difficult experiences trying to tell where I was and relate it to the map. Even though I know that colors change so that things become more blue the farther away they get, it still is very tricky. At one point I became lost and I still do not know how I did it. Luckily I happened to be in an area that had some rocks that I knew very well.

I had fun bringing my boat up on the beach. What I most often did was to tie it off with long lines to a solid rock up the beach and let the tide carry it up. There was no wind to speak of. At one place I assumed that green grass does not grow below the tide line so I put up my tent on this nice, flat, short, green grass. While snoozing away I awoke thinking, well, I ought to check the boat. Wow, what a surprise, the water was just outside the tent, the boat was floating, but the lines I had tied to a rock had floated free at midnight. I got up and immediately grabbed the boat lines and tied them off above the incoming tide.

I gathered up the tent, set it up in some low bushy plants, took everything up, and put it back inside the tent. Whew! It is really a good idea to believe that when you see seaweed washed up that maybe that is where the tide last was!

On my way back, when I passed by Lange Island, I happened to see some icebergs and a few minutes later some of them had rolled over without a sound and broken into pieces. I went by one grounded iceberg which let off a horrible sound like a cannon firing, but the iceberg just sat there and did nothing. I was so glad I was not any closer to it. I really jumped when I heard that, did wonders for my nerves, believe me. The bright sun all day really makes the bergs break up this time of year.

I was surprised at how hot it was south of Upernavik, it was too hot. I could feel a complete difference when I rounded the corner approaching Upernavik. Some dear old Greenlanders saw me paddling and they remembered me from my last visits. They were delighted because they are from that generation who used kayaks.

I am staying at John Kislov's house in Upernavik. He, his wife Gina, and I are having a fine time. John has a motorboat so we are all going out fishing and getting mussels, which we love to eat. We stop on an island and barbeque chicken for a good time. We are eating so much fish John says we are going to turn into fish. Gina and I love to cook so we chat about how to make fish soup which she specializes in putting fresh chili peppers into that she raises on her window sill. She just goes over, picks one or two, and cuts them up into the soup. The chili kind of wakes you up. We also like eating sushi so we make a mix of soy sauce with fresh chili in it and some of the hot green stuff. We dip the freshly caught fish chunks in the soy and then put on some of the hot stuff. Oh boy, talk about how to clean out your nose in a hurry. Wow!

Gina and I like to feast on sea urchin eggs so we pluck them off the rocks at low tide, she cuts them open and prepares the eggs, and we eat them. When I am out in my

kayak at low tide I take them off the rocks with my paddle, chop them open, and eat the eggs. Only the best eating possible, those sea urchin eggs called uni in Japanese.

We also ate fish soup from ulk, which is a type of sea robin. They taste just wonderful cooked for just a few minutes with tomato, onion, chili pepper, and potatoes with mussel stock from last night. Somehow that particular fish looks horrible but it tastes just out of this world boiled a few minutes in salty water.

We got to go up into the ice where seals hang out recently. I was glad for this opportunity because I had not taken any photos of what it actually looks like when boating among the icebergs in the ice off the Upernavik Icefjord. I wanted to have these pictures to show what it actually looks like to be in the ice. Believe me, I would not want to be in my little kayak in that situation. The ice is always moving in gyres on the currents which makes it really scary to think about and icebergs are always doing something. I took some photos of some vertical bergs and then some of really flat ones that were huge as well.

John is very careful boating and we got to come back into Upernavik in the fog, really thick fog, on GPS. This was a type of GPS that shows on a map where we were but it cannot show the icebergs so still we have to be very careful. Hitting ice chunks with a boat is not a good idea.

Gail E. Ferris, 1 Bowhay Hill, Stony Creek, CT 06405-5701, US phone (203) 481 4539, e-mail [gaileferris@hotmail.com](mailto:gaileferris@hotmail.com)

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### Tern Still There

In my story "Wicked Fun at the Sika Flex Challenge" in the October issue, I mentioned donating a damaged Bolger Tern we had built to a local public school, stating: "So, of course, we made the gift and, as far as I know, it still resides, bolted to the wall, near the front entrance of PS 175 City Island, Bronx, New York, welcoming the next generation to school."

Well, this past fall we were back in the area and went by the school and lo, there she was, still in place as pictured.

Brad Anslee, Talassee, TN





### Good Morning From Greenback, Tennessee

Good morning from beautiful Greenback, Tennessee. Here is the view of Tellico Lake from our deck. We're so lucky to have found this place.

Henry Champagny, Greenback, TN



### Good Morning From Greenback, Tennessee

This is our waterfront in Greenback, Tennessee. The two boats in the boathouse are a 20' Simmons Sea Skiff (left) and a 24' Diesel cruiser (right), both of which I built.

Frank Neff, Greenback, TN



## Information of Interest...

### A Great Book by Robb's Father

Readers might be interested in knowing that Robb White's father, Robb White, who was a screen writer in Hollywood and novel writer, wrote a great book in 1946 called *The Lion's Paw*. It was seminal in my boating development and has only recently been put back in print. Robb's dad remarried when he left the family in Thomasville, Georgia, and his second wife's family gained control of his writings. They've recently reprinted the book. My wife found it at the following address: <http://www.thelionspaw.org/>

Robb and I spoke about the book and he was pretty angry that the book had been kept out of publication for so many years. In spite of his ambivalence about his father, our Robb loved this book. My wife ordered several copies and it is as good or better than I remembered. I found a review from the *St. Petersburg Times* linked to *The Lion's Paw* website. I would recommend the book to any young person, or adult for that matter.

Brad Ansley, Talassee, TN

## Information Wanted...

### Steel Rowboat Background

I have a galvanized steel rowboat of unknown origin. In 1927 flat bottom skiffs were built of steel, but this one is not flat bottomed but more typical of standard designs from the '30s. It is in very good shape and I think it belongs someplace special where it will be appreciated for what it is.

Nick Comes, N6215 E Batons Lake Rd, Watersmeet, MI 49969

### Looking for "The Catboat Race"

Can anyone tell me where I can get a copy of "The Catboat Race?" It is a one-page article telling how an old man, as a boy, sat in his grandfather's outhouse with the door open watching a wind whirligig of four catboats racing. It included an artist's concept of the four catboats sailing in a 3' diameter circle on top of a pole. I believe it was published in the *Rudder* in the early 1900s, then re-published later.

Carl Allen, 53 County Rt 31, Oswego, NY 13126-6536, (315) 343-3225

### Anyone Know Mr Dixon?

My son recently had a call on a disability matter from an elderly Jim Dixon and they had a long conversation about Mr Dixon's crossing the Atlantic from west to east. Have you heard anything about him?

A generation back Mr Dixon's father (or uncle?) played around in a boatyard in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, where a derelict boat was shored up. They climbed all over it inside and out. It later turned up as Slocum's *Spray*.

Neal Small, Brooklyn, NY

## Projects...

### Not First Boat Built in Greenwich Village

I enjoyed "The Creation and Maiden Voyage of the Great Eastern" in the October issue. Even though the article was first printed 25 years ago, it was not the first small boat built in Greenwich village. In 1963 I got carried away and built a 12'x12' catamaran of my own design in the 12'x12' living room of a walk-up apartment on Cornelia Street. It was designed to be broken down and fit through the airshaft window, lowered by ropes, and temporarily mounted astride my Austin Healy Sprite. All went as planned and it arrived safely at my brother-in-law's waterfront cottage on Shelter Island, 100 miles east. The next day it even floated, but I soon discovered why I should have sent for professional plans. It would run and reach but it wouldn't tack.

I now sail a 39' sloop, *Salsa*, my seventh boat, but I still have fond memories of Boat #1.

Monty Morris, Marblehead, MA

### Summer Circuit

An outstanding attraction of Colorado's Western Slope is the Grand Mesa Boatworks peach patch boat shop. It keeps a low profile in the slick mag world, but among the cognoscenti it's a must see.

The peach trees have been farmed out so that the old boat builder can devote himself to his craft. Unfortunately, the geezer glassmeister spends much time dozing in the sun or gazing pensively at the Grand Mesa, which rises abruptly to 10,000' a few miles east of the shop.

Doug Moses has made two trips to pick up the last two hulls I had lying around here. Actually, one was a custom New York Whitehall that spent so many years lying back in the Virginia jungle that it is a major rebuild. The other was the Western Lady plug which could go either way, plank-on-edge cutter or power launch. Doug has the Express Whitehall, which he brought to Starvation last spring, on the market so that he can concentrate on these new projects. It's a deal for somebody.

Stan Garfield spent some years in these parts and was the second guy to sign on for the Western Lady fantail hull. Stan had won a steam engine in a raffle. It's been so long that Stan has built a large electric boat while waiting. Stan and a friend were in Ouray just south of here trying to locate an old family gold claim. Stan has been out a couple of times previously so this time I had the mold to show him, which is real progress. The first Western Lady hull was due to be laid up before the end of October.

A couple of days after I got back from Kokopelli, Mississippi Bob stopped by to see the shop and projects. He and the Missus were headed home after seeing the Grand Canyon. Says he'll be out for another Starvation one of these days.

Jim Thayer, Grand Mesa Boatworks, 15654 57½ Rd, Collbran, CO 81624-9778



Garfield and friend check mold.



Mississippi Bob in front of Grand Junction's iconic Mt Garfield.

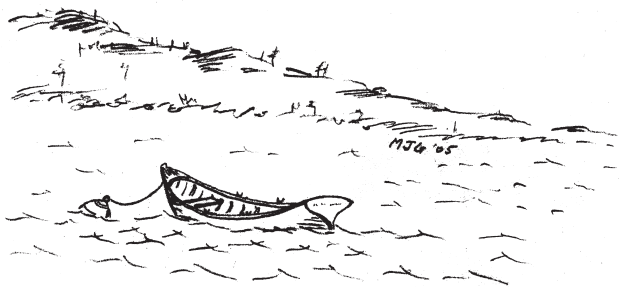


Doug and Karen Moses with Western Lady plug.

### Swamp Yankee a Great Boat

I built one of Bob Sparks' Swamp Yankee canoes about a year ago and it is great. It finished out at just 24lbs. At 80 years and 135lbs I can carry it around and even set it on the top of my car. This is the third canoe I have built and it is my favorite.

Capt Bob Hoyle, Punta Gorda, FL



## From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman

For those of you addicted to the sea, to her majesty, her whims, her occasional fury, find yourself a tide-wrapped rock from whose vantage you may educate your spirit. For the sea is mother to these upstart islands we fondly know as home. She is generative and consoling and instructive. Heed her instruction. Her chastisements are renowned for their persuasiveness.

Along the southeast Rhode Island coast there are very few tide-wrapped rocks. They exported them all to Massachusetts, hence the allusions to its stern and rockbound coast. Rhode Islanders prefer their rocks small and piled in such a way as to thwart the sea from eroding their precious beaches.

One autumn evening, a few years back, we took a stroll on the foreshore preceding supper. The breakwater forming the eastern bank of the breachway to Ninigrett Pond jutted into the sea a mile before us. Cottages line the beachfront, but the sandy shore has a gradual slope and the foreshore, which is public, extends for miles both east and west of the breach way. Surfcasters, dogs, joggers, and seagulls all enjoy getting sand between their toes. During the summer, the sands are littered with pale tourists exposing themselves for the sake of assuming one attribute of those races they most despise.

The breakwater, built of piled rock, provides a resort for fishermen with and without wings. Broken clam and crab shells litter the rocks. Parallel to this breakwater runs another retaining wall, also of piled rock. The breachway between cleanses a couple of thousand acres of salt marsh pond. It whips through its channel furiously and often grows turbulent where it meets the sea. As Ninigrett Pond has little depth, no one sails in it except the occasional Sunfish or sailboard. A mile-long channel meanders back to the mainland where a small marina snuggles up to the shore at Cross' Mills. Its clientele consists of small power craft.

I enquired about the channel when I owned my Cape Dory Typhoon. Though she had a full keel, she drew only 30". The marina informed me that, at low tide, barely 3' of water ran through the channel. During spring tides, I might have to carry my boat. I declined a berth, even though the marina was convenient to my home. When I go aground, I prefer not to be within sight of my slip, it makes for a better story.

And the breachway can be a daunting place when the current runs four to five knots. I prefer my harbor more accessible, more breezy, and a bit more wet. I want to be able to sail all the way to my slip in case my engine fails. I had visions of slogging a mile of waist-deep channel, towing my boat.

This evening we strolled the foreshore, shoes in hand. The beach here consists of sand. The trash line consists of shredded kelp and bits of quahog shell. A scattering of smooth dark pebbles complements the mixture. Scarcely a thing of interest comes ashore. On our horizon, directly south, Block Island can be discerned during clear weather, about one day out of three. Anything they heave overboard there, eight miles away, comes ashore somewhere else. A beachcomber would die of boredom here. Our ravenous seagulls pray for such an event.

The sun went down, or the earth turned up, according to Galileo, and we came about at the breakwater and followed our extravagant tracks toward home. We had the strand to ourselves this autumn evening. Most cottages stood empty, their darkened windows staring blindly seaward. Most cottagers seem a communal species, basking in the company of sunbathers and neighbors. By October, the strand is quiet once more, and we come here to lose and find ourselves, to watch the sun set and ignite far Montauk Point.

A couple of men, attended by a yellow Lab, arranged their gear above high water and began their tireless litany of casting for striped bass. Their fish lines lost resolution in the twilight. The last of the local cormorants sped toward the pond to take refuge for the night. A station wagon belonging to the DEP met us and continued toward the breachway, leaving unfertile furrows in the sand.

We suddenly discerned a small upright figure near the water's edge. When we approached, it took no notice of us. It proved to be a murre, a knee-high black and white diving bird, sitting up, forlornly, on her haunches. A relative of the auk, the murre has a slender bill and a svelter figure. This poor creature appeared to have lost her sight and, consequently, inclination to live. We waved to the returning DEP official, who told us he had investigated several similar cases. He put the unoffending creature into a carton and took her away for testing. We never heard anything more.

How many of us lose our sight, not to mention our inclinations, and find our poor selves stranded. The shores of this wholesome world are wide and it isn't only islands that disappear in the dusk. Things just before our eyes can vanish as well: the sea, the sky, the faces of those we love. All shall presently disappear in darkness.

Yet, as always, the sea advances upon the shore with its world-load of pebbles. The sea recedes. Some pebbles are stranded; some are displaced, forever. The sea advances once more.

## Flotsam and Jetsam

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Opinions,  
and Wisdom  
from a Life Spent  
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ROBB WHITE

With a foreword by Bailey White

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Wall size commemorative photomontage graced the tent where personal tributes were presented.

Phil Bolger's death saddened boat lovers from all over the world this past spring. On the last weekend of the summer Phil's widow, Susanne Altenburger, invited his friends and family to commemorate him on his native Gloucester waters. She encouraged us to bring our Bolger boats as well as our memories. On Saturday we'd show the incarnations of Phil's genius dockside, then share thoughts and reflections about him at a memorial Saturday night. Sunday we'd take a nautical tour of the places where Phil learned and first practiced his genius in boat design, writing, reading, and sustainable maritime industry.

Susanne was a fabulous hostess, making arrangements with the harborside Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center for a tent, tables, and chairs adjacent to their Boat Shop. For those of us able to bring Bolger boats, Susanne made arrangements with the GMHC for us to tie up to their floats to spend the night. Both the venue and the weather were spectacular with a continuous stream of sailing schooners, modern commercial trawlers, pleasure boats large and small, lobster boats, and head boats for scuba diving, whale-watching, and deep sea fishing passing by. We got a sense not only of the variety of nautical craft that inspired Phil's artistry, but also of the heritage of Gloucester's waterfront industry and how much our future prosperity and nutrition depend on it.

Our personal participation in the events of the weekend began with my launching of

## Celebrating Phil Bolger's Life on the Water

By Rob Gogan

our Bolger Micro, the 2-by-2, into Gloucester's Annisquam River at high tide on Friday at the Dun Fudgin ramp behind the high school. The Annisquam's current is determined by the tide. With a new moon on Saturday, the current was flowing south at about two knots. A northwest breeze blew at about 15 knots, but gusted up to 30. NOAA reported a small craft warning. I decided to reef, even though the air in the river was light. Out in the harbor it would be more vigorous, and since this was my first adventure in these storied waters, I wanted to err on the side of caution. The ramp was quiet, with only three or four parked trucks and boat trailers in a lot striped for at least 50. No one put in or pulled out in the two hours it took me to rig up and launch. That was to change on Sunday at pull-out time!

Before shoving off, I called the Harbor-master's Office to ask about the drawbridge I would have to pass through at the harbor end of the river. The attendant told me that the protocol is to call on VHF channel 13 and request a lift. I had never used my radio for anything other than getting the NOAA weath-

er reports, which alone is reason enough for anyone who spends more than an hour offshore to get one, in my opinion. I tried to reach the bridge tender a couple of times but he didn't answer. I could hear him talking to other boaters, though. As I was listening in vain for a response, a big powerboat with a double flying bridge cruised downriver. They were definitely going to need a bridge lift to get through. So I raised our mizzen and the mainsail and took off in pursuit. Even if my radio didn't work, as long as I got close enough to the cruiser, I could pop through right behind him.

Both the current and wind were with me. The river channel funneled into a narrow canal at the bridge. When I came around the last bend and into view of the bridge house, I heard the tender call, "Sailing vessel, come back!" I responded that I needed a bridge lift, too, but he didn't acknowledge. Maybe I wasn't pushing the "talk" button hard enough or maybe it was broken. In any case, soon I had to put down the radio and sail with both hands because I was coming hard upon the cruiser, which was hovering in place in reverse so as not to get too close to the bridge or the stonework beside it. I turned quickly towards the riverbank and into the wind, intending to tack, and was still making forward progress through the water, but the current was steadily sweeping the hull towards the cruiser's transom at walking speed. Several comfortable passengers, all with beer in hand, scanned the 2-by-2 with looks of puz-

zled appreciation. I had seen that expression many times before. "Did you build that?" one passenger asked.

"No, but I bought her from an amateur builder," I answered. David Jost had built and sold her to me seven years earlier. Meanwhile, I was scrambling to try to catch some wind to keep from colliding with the well-finished stern of the cruiser. The high banks made the wind fluky, though. One of the passengers got up to fend off, appreciative of the fact that I had no motor. I was about to reach for the oars and thole pins, but just then the siren sounded and the bridge began to rise.

I thanked the helpful crewman and backed the main to resume our course downriver. The minute the cruiser captain put his gear in forward, he pulled away quickly, adding several knots to the current. I sailed as fast as possible in pursuit, not wanting the tender to drop the bridge before I was through. There was a lengthening line of cars and trucks backing up with the raised bridge in the lunchtime traffic. They would not be patient with a slow-moving motorless sailor delaying their progress.

Fortunately the mainsail, even though furled, caught enough of the wind again to keep us squarely in the middle of the current. We made brisk progress into the canal, past the bridge and adjacent public park. I'd need the wind power to keep the current from surpassing the boat's wind-driven progress. The rudder would then lose all leverage and the hull would swirl helplessly with the current. That wasn't the case here and we sailed past the park and its appreciative tourists who looked down with the same familiar bemused expression, as if to say, "What the heck is that?"

During the flotilla cruise on Sunday Susanne told me that the bridge tenders require sails to be dropped and motors running through the channel. I'm glad the tender didn't see fit to enforce that rule when the tide was ramming the 2-by-2 through!

Once through the channel we entered Gloucester Outer Harbor. The tide swirled and boiled as it met the oncoming ocean swells. For a moment we were pulled into a small maelstrom, but the stiff breeze kicked in once more and further offshore we sailed, well into Gloucester Outer Harbor.

My eyes feasted on the storied shores of Gloucester as we trimmed towards our destination, the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center (GMHC). Though I couldn't make out the "Man at the Wheel" statue (also known as the "Gloucester Fisherman" and widely advertised in a corporate seafood logo), I could see that cars were parked and tourists were lining the nearby shore.

My grandmother had taken my sister and I here when we were little to see Richard Cardinal Cushing bless the Gloucester fishing fleet. Afterwards she showed us the famous statue. My grandmother had a bronze miniature on a lamp in her living room. With reverence, she pointed out the memorial plaques listing the names of over 6,000 Gloucester fisherman who had lost their lives at sea over the centuries. Even this year, three new names were added to the total when a winter storm sank a trawler. My grandmother was especially sympathetic to the hazards of maritime industry as both her brother-in-law and father-in-law fished and lobstered for a living Downeast. Her demeanor conveyed to my sister and I how sacred these Gulf of Maine waters were, not only to the people of

Gloucester, but also to the tourists who come to savor the charms of a working port, to all Americans who respect our maritime heritage, to all diners around the world who eat fish, and to all parents who hope to nourish their offspring and future generations with the fruits of the sea.

As Susanne and others made clear on Saturday night, Phil Bolger loved not only Gloucester's boats, but also its heritage of thriving marine industry through which the entire region has prospered by harvesting waters teeming with biodiversity and nutritious foods. The centuries have seen tens of thousands of lucrative jobs catching, processing, preserving, selling, and shipping seafood. By applying more of Phil and Susanne's fishing boat design wisdom to the abundant bravery of those called down to the sea in ships, it was Phil's dying wish that the Gloucester fishing industry would thrive again.

Never having been to GMHC, with only a tourist map of the town with which to navigate, I was glad to be able to pull out my cell phone and call the GMHC. I had called earlier to confirm that their floats and docks were available for us Bolger boaters to tie up Friday as well as Saturday. Susanne had posted on the *WoodenBoat* "People and Places" blog, as well as the Yahoo Bolger group, that all Bolger boats and their crews were welcome to tie up and spend the night Saturday. Cruising briskly with the northwester, plying the tiller carefully to avoid the increasing number of pleasure boat moorings, I steered towards a prominent gazebo on a large tongue of smooth, rolling granite. There was a similar looking structure depicted on the map next to the GMHC.

The kind staff at GMHC oriented me and Harriet went out to the end of the wharf to wave me in. Thanks, Harriet, Emily, and Bill! I docked and furled sail for the night, keeping my reef points tied as the breeze was predicted to match today's Small Craft Warnings.

Waking up on the harbor the next morning was spectacular. I was awakened long before first light by the comings and goings of the fishing boats whose ample wakes rocked and thumped the 2-by-2 about ten times with each passage. I didn't allow myself above decks until 5am. At about 4:45 I heard and felt the steps of someone coming on the float. An early Bolgerite? GMHC employee? Wayward reveler? I fancied it was the ghost of Phil Bolger, coming down to see an amateur-built Micro before the crowds arrived.

Spirit or human, the visitor was gone when I popped my head out the companionway shortly after 5:00. Orion, Mars, and the Bull were there, though, and gave me a spectacular welcome in the dark new-moon sky despite the many shore lights surrounding the marine industrial establishments. The pinkening dawn had yet to outshine the constellations. The harbor view from the water was splendid, better and cheaper than nearly all shore real estate. We were still the only Bolger vessel at the docks, though I later learned that Howard Sharp in his Chebacco *Lily Catchpole* had spent the night on one of the Harbormaster's moorings nearby.

Commercial vessels continued to head in or out of the port. Pleasure boats also motored by. From what I overheard from one fishing party at the Town Landing adjacent to the GMHC, the tuna fishing was heating up. Directly across the harbor from our dock was the still-active Gloucester

Marine Railway. The glorious hull of the 150' schooner *Unicorn* stood high and dry in the ways. Its tall spars dominated the skyline of the opposite shore.

A less pleasant aspect of the harbor was the sulfurous smell emanating from the exposed tall piers of the GMHC and the Harbormaster's Office. A strong scent of creosote from the old timbers occasionally wafted together with the normal sulfurous low-tide shore smell. A massive tangle of sargassum and other indigenous seaweeds lay exposed by the tide. The night before I had heard and seen many large splashes from fish coming in to feast on the pickings of the flooded shore. I was glad to know that these nutrient-rich, oxygen-suffused cold waters were still hosting a bountiful array of creatures. The plankton-rich waters of Gloucester appear among the top ten sites worldwide for scuba diving, with the rich diversity of finned, shelled, and leafed biota. No green algae spoiled the shore. The spongy fingers of this invasive native of Asian waters have choked out native species from New Brunswick to North Carolina, including my usual Buzzards Bay cruising grounds.

Sitting on deck, eating my rolled oats, nuts, and raisins, I thought of Roger Keyes, renowned Australian sailor who has explored most of the south coast of Australia in his Micro Navigator, the *Paloma Blanca*. His favorite breakfast is cold rolled oats. I wondered whether Roger was the mysterious "Q" who commissioned Phil to add an expanded cabin to make his Micro seaworthy enough to shelter a lone sailor on an intended circumnavigation of Australia through the "Roaring '40s." Later in the day Bruce Hallman described how reading Phil's narrative of how and why he had designed the Navigator inspired him to build one of his own. This piece appeared in *MAIB* on January 1, 1999.

After breakfast, I decided to try to find a coffee shop at which I could charge up my phone, enjoy a fresh brew, and check the Bolger list to see if anyone else was planning to come in. I made 2-by-2 as shipshape as I could. My hasty deck painting job the week before helped to hide a hard summer of boating. But she still looked like a frumpy madam who tries to conceal a plain visage with a new wardrobe with her lumpy paint job, stained brightwork, and dinged-up hull. I know that many Bolger boat builders far more skilled than I with chisel and paintbrush would soon be scanning the details of 2-by-2's workmanship. Before heading out with my reusable mug, phone, and charger, I spread the better sides of my flotation cushions around the deck to help cover the paint job. No one else was there when I left the GMHC around 0730.

I found the Lone Gull Café on Main St, a friendly place with excellent coffee, good pastries, and last but not least, an empty table adjacent to a wall outlet. Now that my charger had more than an 8% battery charge, I felt free to check the Bolger Yahoo group list thoroughly and post the details I had discovered about launching at Dun Fudgin, getting the drawbridge up, and docking at GMHC. This is when I learned that Bolger fans would be arriving from as far away as Ontario, San Francisco, and Alaska to commemorate Phil's life. I lingered over coffee until my phone charge surpassed 80% and around 9am I returned to the docks.

When I got back I saw a salty-looking gentleman inspecting the 2-by-2. I introduced



myself as the owner, accepting all blame for poor maintenance of David Jost's fine amateur construction of my boat. Eric Schoonover of Gloucester was magnanimous in declaring it a seaworthy vessel. He did mention quietly that there was too much play in my tiller and suggested an epoxy/sawdust filling and re-drilling to tighten her up. Duly noted and now on my list for this winter! Eric was a retired professor of maritime literature who had built a Micro, launched as the *Tuva*. He had passed the boat along to another Gloucesterite, his baker, Jon Hardy, who had a couple of young boys and a yearning to take his family a-sailing. Eric declined my offer to take a turn around the harbor in the 2-by-2, saying that his "new knees" wouldn't tolerate it. Though I was itching to sail out and explore the harbor, I was having such a good conversation with Eric that I was happy to stay ashore.

We moved our conversation to the next float, the Town Landing, so that there would be dock space for the Bolger boats tying up later in the morning. As we chatted about Bolger, boat building, maritime literature and Micro sailing, a 47' Coast Guard motor lifeboat approached the town landing towing a 16' power boat. I would have shoved off the float to give them maneuvering room but Eric assured me that 2-by-2 was no obstruction given the multiple adjustable thrusters and jets on the Coast Guard boat. I carefully looked at each of the Guardsmen to see if they made eye contact in preparation to order me off the float but none of them seemed concerned. Eric called their craft a "Cutter" and I didn't correct him. I knew from my father, a Coast Guard veteran, that "Cutter" is the term properly used only for a vessel 65' or greater. All smaller craft are "boats."

Eric was right as the burdened vessel glided up to the dock beautifully. One of the Guardsmen told us that they had picked up the pleasure craft eight miles out to sea with a dead motor. The captain wrote up what I assume was some kind of citation on a state-trooper-style protected pad, tearing out a document which he passed to the young captain who was busily talking on a cell phone. Soon the Coast Guard boat nimbly pulled back into its berth next to the Town Landing.

Eric decided to give his knees a rest and walked around to the GMHC pier, which had a capacious bench at its end. I boarded and rowed the 2-by-2 back to the wharf while Eric walked. The rising tide swallowed more and more of the pilings and piers. Eric told me that the tide was to rise 11' today, 2' beyond normal due to the new moon. I docked at the end of the float so that I could launch if larger boats wanted to come tie up for the night, then I joined Eric to sit at the end of the GMHC pier to eat my lunch. Soon the glorious sight of a three-masted schooner gave me the chance to photograph Schoonover with the schooner in the same frame!

Bolgerites by the dozen were arriving now, including Lance Gunderson. Eric and I chatted with Lance about his cruising adventures in a variety of Bolger sailboats in Downeast Maine. His current rig was a Black Skimmer, big sister to Micro, which he kept in Kittery, Maine. Though his boat was only 40 miles downwind of us, Lance couldn't escape work commitments and had to come to the Memorial by land. He amazed us with his tales of pulling into a shallow bay to escape a gale where the water was only 1' deep at low tide. Black Skimmer with only an 8" draft

made it through the storm beautifully though the ocean waves crashed thunderously on the sheltering point upwind.

Lance asked me if Micro's sail track had ever parted from the mast or if the pegs broke off the sprit booms. I said they had, but with four pegs at the end of each spar I'd never found it to be a problem and that I just tapped in a new 4" length of dowelling in case of breakage. Lance asked if I kept dowelling on board and I said I hadn't thought of it but I'd do it in the future. Lance simply tied his main sheet with a running hitch and it holds up fine without even using the pegs. These and a dozen other little tips quickly expanded my Bolger boating bag of tricks.

Then, around 11am a parade of Bolger boats arrived at the GMHC. Seth Macinko's Tennessee with Auray Punt tender majestically docked at the closest float to shore. Lance and Eric decided to accept Seth's offer of a tour. I, too, wanted to see this slim, seaworthy houseboat in which Eric lived aboard all summer, but I also wanted to sail the harbor before we were boxed in by other dockers. So I hopped into the 2-by-2 and, with mainsail still reefed, unfurled the mizzen sail and drifted backwards into the breeze. I was hoping to give the dock gallery a brief demonstration of how Micro can sail well while reefed for a 30-knot gusty day.

My decision to keep the reef in was not over cautious. Hefty blasts heeled the 2-by-2 well over. Mason Smith told me later that Bolger had recommended that Micro captains ballast their craft to an 11° heel to leeward so that the hard chines could help slow side slippage. Without the reef today we would have heeled past 30 degrees and risked mechanical failure. This was the last place in which I wanted to embarrass myself with a popped-out block or uncontrolled jibe, so I kept the reef in all day.

I saw some interesting moored boats and shore activity but the GMHC had the best action on the harbor so I returned. There was an extended stretch to leeward of the docks where the wind was fluky and patchy so I sailed without a luff where the wind was good and then luffed, gliding longer than usual up to the dock, where a Bolgerite caught my mast at the now-crowded dock. Many of the dockers had cameras but they were content to stay ashore. Several told me of their enjoyment in seeing a Bolger-designed, amateur-built boat glide smoothly into a dock under gusty conditions.

Jon Hardy had brought his Micro over from a slip across the harbor. Eric was delighted to see his handiwork present, now renamed the *Edith*. Mason and Maggie Smith also had arrived under power in the *Pelican*, another beautiful manifestation of Bolger's Micro design. I asked if I could hitch up with them for a Micro parley. I dropped the main and started to lash up to the dock bumpers. Then another Micro admirer, Chris Brunette with his two young children, asked questions about the construction and behavior of the 2-by-2. He said how envious he was of we sailors and that all he had in which to take out his family was a squat canoe. I asked him if he'd like to come out for a turn around the harbor and he accepted immediately.

While he dashed up to his car to get personal flotation devices for his kids, I re-rigged the main and invited Marco and Ana Gracia (aged about 7 and 5) down into the cabin. I knew from experience with my nieces and nephews that peeking out the port-



Eric Schoonover and Gloucester Schooner framed by Micro spars.



Harry James, Lance Gunderson, and Seth Macinko compare notes on their experiences building and sailing many Bolger designs dockside.



Mason Smith's Micro *Pelican* joined the Micro Fleet.

Chris Brunette rows the Chubby Tubby.





Seth Macinko's Tennessee, our flagship for Sunday's flotilla.

Speedy Martha Jane Terrapin shows off her distinctive tanbark sails.



Seth Macinko's Auray Punt hot rod, sailed prone, was the fastest sailboat in the fleet.

Mark Murray-Brown and sons Julian and Sebastian arrive from across the harbor in their Diablo.



holes and climbing on the berths and cubbyholes belowdecks would keep them busy and out of the way. Soon Chris was back and we shoved off for a sail up and down the harbor. We roared past the docks a couple of times on a beam reach in the ripping breeze to show the camera-toting dockers and would-be Bolger boat builders that a Micro could, in fact, reach 4 knots while reefed.

As we reached back and forth, builder Calvin DeVries and his brother Ron from Ontario rowed comfortably around the docks in their modified Tortoise. Ron snapped lots of photos. I was happy to see that both DeVrieses were wearing PFDs!

The Brunettes and I found far more Micro fans on a sightseeing boat crowded with over 100 passengers sailing outbound. I explained to the children, now on deck, the custom of waving to other boaters to show friendliness and that all is well on board. I challenged the kids to get at least one person to wave back to us. Marco knelt against Micro's tall bulkhead, no more than waist-high to the gunwales. Ana Gracia stood on the cockpit deck, held by Chris, and they both waved as hard as they could with fully-extended arcs of their arms. Soon every single passenger on the boat, on all three decks, was waving back at the two happy children. I praised them for the perfect success they'd achieved and their smiles showed that they'd remember this sail.

Chris told me that he is a long-time admirer of Bolger boats but that he was just starting restoration of a good-sized catboat hull. He'd brought his car-topper Chubby Tubby canoe for the Sunday flotilla. He said as we approached the docks again that he'd be happy to come out sailing anytime. Henry Hardy, Jon's young son, caught our mast this time.

The Brunettes clambered out after I showed the kids the secret location of the tiny

statue of Mr and Mrs Noah, the 2-by-2's good luck charm. I rafted up against the *Pelican* with Mason's permission, dropping all three of the bumpers over. As I de-rigged, several of the dockers said how good we'd looked coming in and how neatly we'd docked her. To my mind I'd done only a mediocre job, as Henry had needed to brake us more than I would have liked. But seeing any Bolger boat function as a real live sailboat was thrilling to those who had seen only plans or photos. I know how keenly I'd have watched a Micro under sail seven years ago when I was only a Bolger wanna-be.

By now, an hour before the memorial service was to begin, the docks were full of Bolger boats under power of sail, oar, and motor. Adam Zapf and his father Richard (for whom Bolger designed Red Zinger) arrived in the graceful and seaworthy Flat-Bottomed Clam Skiff. Builder and pilot Adam alternately sat and stood, tiller in hand, taking passengers out into the harbor and back. Walter Crocker rowed in with his Gloucester Gull, the boat design that Phil called his ticket to heaven. Walter had built her 21 years ago and had enjoyed her ever since. Mark Murray-Brown, another Gloucesterite, motored in with sons Julian and Sebastian in their Diablo. The Murray-Browns were friends of the Hardys and the boys shared updates from the morning's soccer games. Howard Sharp's spectacularly-finished Chebacco *Lily Catchpole* sailed in and docked up just astern of the GMHC's *Miss Ellaneous*.

I had noticed the speedy Martha Jane *Terrapin*, with its distinctive tanbark sails, zooming around the harbor with unreefed sails. Soon it docked as well, sailed by George Broadlich and Kim Wallace with canine passenger Butterball. George and crew definitely get the prize for bringing a Bolger boat the furthest distance, all the way from Indiana!

Many trailered Bolger boats parked on the grounds of the GMHC, including the *Gadabout*, a canal cruiser based on Phil's Cartoon #5 for *Small Boat Journal*. Though *Gadabout* has been thoroughly enjoyed for each of her 20 years, Jan and Jay Koleszar keep her in pristine condition as a Coast Guard Auxiliary inspection boat on the Connecticut River. The first Queen Mab minicatboat, with its exquisitely fine details, sat directly on the pavement. It is light enough even for the petite captain to pick up and slide into a pick-up truck bed. Dave Irland's jewel of a Defender, the *Antonina*, rested atop his car, ready for launching for the Sunday flotilla. Several Gloucester Light Dories also proudly testified not only to the beauty of Bolger's heavenly inspiration, but to their builders' exemplary execution of its construction for active use.

Meanwhile, the Micro fleet was swapping adventures. Mason Smith described his 40-mile sail across Lake Ontario, which he made in seven hours. He noted with relish how his little *Pelican* had overtaken a 30-plus-foot, well-appointed sailing yacht from Toronto on a broad reach. I countered with my three-day adventure across Buzzards Bay to Mattapoisett through wind and fog around the notorious Spindle, made more exciting by the failure of the screws holding the snotter block to the mast. Jon and I compared notes about how to get out of irons when tacking in choppy water, a common Micro experience with a full boat. My solution to tacking while luffing in irons, 100% reliable, is to grab the sprit and push back the mainsail to the desired tack. Micro's bow always turns obediently until the boom is taking the wind productively to leeward, at which point the sprit is released and progress resumed.

We could have talked of such things for much longer and did indeed resume our Micro seminar the next morning, but we noticed



the docks were empty and the tables beneath the tent nearly surrounded with occupied chairs. We found seats under a large awning adjacent to GMHC's Boat Shop.

Susanne led the ceremony with grace and composure. She spoke movingly about Phil's life, his career, their marriage, their professional partnership, and the sad but independent manner in which Phil had ended his life. We heard instrumental and vocal music, both live and recorded. Large-format photos of Phil, Susanne, and their boats adorned the Boat Shop's walls. A number of speakers stepped up to give personal reminiscences of Phil's unique talents and personality. Several testified to his irreverent but eminently practical genius for designing boats to meet particular purposes. Some acknowledged that Phil had offended and annoyed many in the small boat community with his unconventional designs, many of which owner/builders could construct cheaply and quickly (if not instantly), using ordinary tools and materials. Several speakers showed how Phil usually had the last laugh over his doubters as his fleet of proven designs swelled with thousands of satisfied builders and sailors. Richard Zapf told how his Red Zinger design was at first disappointingly slow, but when the problem was diagnosed as improperly cut sails she sailed faster than nearly all boats of similar size.

One of the funniest and most moving speakers was Harlan Robinson, who spoke of Phil's happiness with Susanne, both as wife and partner, and his daily gratitude for having found her. Harlan described the adventures he and Phil had shared in England. Great reader of history and literature that he was, Phil could guide them to pubs and historic sites with perfect accuracy, even though he had never been there before, using the knowledge he had retained from his readings. On two occasions, when they visited other boat designers, they were mobbed by small boat lovers familiar with Phil's creations who wanted to meet the genius from America.

Carolyn Kirk, the Mayor of Gloucester, and State Senator Bruce Tarr testified to the economic value of Bolger's maritime conceptions and the jobs that will be created in working towards Phil's vision of a revival of boat building and a new fleet of thrifter fishing boats on the Gloucester waterfront and nearby. As musicians, politicians, and speakers alternated presentations, participants enjoyed a generous dinner of fish (of course), beer, and wine.

Susanne then told us about the work she and Phil have been doing for the US Navy and pointed to a letter from the US Naval Sea Systems Command attesting to the Navy's high satisfaction with the fresh solutions PB&F had presented to such projects as delivering and retrieving Navy SEALs off a beach with small craft.

Susanne then had shown a half-hour video of Phil visiting various sites around Gloucester's waterfront in the last year of his life. With passion and deep care for his beloved Gloucester and its maritime heritage, his life-long home, Phil contended that better fishing boat design and wiser zoning would allow marine industry, pleasure boating, and tourism all to thrive on the waterfront for years to come. Slimmer, more fuel-efficient boats would allow fishermen to make more money while harvesting fewer fish, extending the resource while enhancing the fishing fleet's prosperity. Most important for the

future, better fishing boats will result in far less diesel exhaust in the air and oil spills in the water. Thus his views have been embraced not only by conservationists, but also by more and more fishermen. In addition, the slimmer, simpler boats of Bolger's design can be built by fishermen themselves, perhaps bringing back the day when most winter farmyards in Chebacco Parish (now the town of Essex) sprouted sturdy fishing vessels of proven seaworthiness.

Phil also emphasized in his video the economic value of recreational boating, particularly in New England. This connected us amateurs with the ancient seafaring heritage of Gloucester, and though boats for us are only the stuff of hobbies, we also have an important role to play in restoring and maintaining the economic vigor of Gloucester's seafaring industries and deserve a place on the waterfront, although not in competition with the marine railways, commercial boatyards, and seafood processing plants.

Susanne left us with the ambitious vision of a boat building school and shop at the GMHC which would nurture the revival of a sustainable marine industry, so important not only to Gloucester's economic future but for the nutrition of hungry generations yet to come. She encouraged all the Bolger boats, as well as any other boaters, to join a floating parade up the Annisquam to see Phil's home waters. Departure time was set at 10:30am Sunday so as to have a fair tide. We offered a ride to Lance Gunderson, who keenly wanted to participate in the flotilla but didn't have a boat of his own. We then broke up, some of us to retire to our berths dockside, others of us to join the Gloucester Street Festival, still others to wend their way back home.

My wife Frann's work duties done, she was able to join me for most of the memorial service and we spent the night aboard the 2-by-2. We awoke to a calm, starry harbor the next morning. As had happened the day before, a short, vigorous man rowing a trim yellow dory passed us with strong, deep strokes. He later came in to explore the Bolger boats, standing up and sculling in the built-in transom oarlock. He reminded us of a swimming gull, moving lightly but swiftly in close quarters over the water. He rowed to his breakfast each morning. Once we had finished our cold breakfast and had hot coffee, we spent a marvelous morning dockside, discussing and touring each other's boats.

We explored *Edith's* well-finished interior with Jon Hardy and his loquacious son Henry, admiring Eric Schoonover's innovations: adjusting bunks with elevating heads for reading; bright-finished walnut shelving at both ends of the cabin; permanent step beneath companionway, so much better than the picnic cooler we use, which unless positioned just right can wobble, especially in a chop; and a walnut/maple butcher block cockpit hatch cover.

Jon also had a large clock over the starboard berth readable from the helm. How convenient! Jon was impressed with the cockpit hatch cover platform David Jost had installed directly beneath the hatch as a footrest, as Phil's plans had recommended, providing level footing at a convenient height. As we talked, Jon's son Henry darted in and out of several of the boats. He boasted that he'd made friends and gotten food and drink offers from everyone for a most satisfying breakfast.

Soon a crew of seven rowers belonging to GMHC's 100-member-strong rowing club



Calvin and Ron Devries row and photograph in their modified Tortoise.



Adam Zapf gave many rides in his Flat-Bottomed Clam Skiff.



Walter Crocker and his 21-year-old Gloucester Gull, the design Phil called his ticket to heaven.



Dave Irland's Defender *Antonina* begs to be rowed.

Howard Sharp's Chebacco *Lily Catchpole* delights all with its gorgeous finish.



came down with their long oars and boarded one of the long wooden wherries. Under the tight discipline of their cox, the crew raised oars vertically, leveled and feathered them, and began to row. No doubt some of them had participated in the round-Cape Ann Blackburn Challenge rowing race this summer.

Calm had come to the harbor waters overnight, and offered excellent conditions for rowing. So we went out for a row in the 2-by-2 with Jon and Henry. We usually don't use a motor on the 2-by-2. Our reluctance to pollute our beautiful shores' air and water precludes use of a gasoline motor. We have an electric, but juggling the heavy lead-acid battery and adding to the cargo weight taints this, too. I also tow our young nieces and nephew behind us as we sail and I don't want them to fear that the propeller would suddenly start spinning, as I used to when a child on my grandfather's boat. Motorless boating also sharpens our seamanship, making us much more sensitive to wind and tide.

Roger Keyes, builder and sailor of the famous Australian Micro Navigator *Palo- ma Blanca*, also speaks of this aspect. He is reputed to be able to slow down and even sail backwards with perfect control without a motor by using his mizzen. Finally, no motor means no foul-smelling, polluting petrochemicals, no risk of electric shock or acid splashing, and no deadweight sinking our hull deeper in the water. Best incentive of all is that I like to row Micro as well. She glides along with a merry tinkling when I've found the rhythm of the 9' sweeps. I like the rocking exercise, I like watching the lingering twin whirlpools in our wake, which collect luminous glowing creatures when we row at night.

We cruise along around 1 knot, I reckon. I've made progress into headwinds of up to 15 knots with both sails down. Of course, there are drawbacks (all of which would become apparent before the day was out), the principal one being the inability to travel on waters where motors are required, such as the Cape Cod Canal (or, in fact, the Annisquam River canal, as I learned Sunday!), or in congested waters with fluky winds.

So first I, and then Jon, took turns at the oars. We use steel bolts as thole pins, connected to the oars with rot-proof Dacron lines. The creaking of these lines creates an old, relaxed nautical tempo. Though the oars are carbon fiber wrapped wood weighing under three pounds apiece, they enable us to partake of the ancient maritime skills of oarsmanship, which I relish. As long as there is not much wind, Micro's lead keel sustains a steady momentum. Jon remarked that the

thole pins are much quieter than oarlocks, which clank and rattle with every stroke.

We rowed around a fine old yacht from Rockland, Maine. Henry pointed out the figurehead, a colorfully-painted horse. Frann remarked that it looked like an old carousel horse, and indeed it must have been. We speculated about the beauty of watching the bounding movements of this charger as the craft pointed upwind into the waves. We also circled an enormous trimaran, the *Popeye* out of Chesapeake Bay, homeward bound from Cape Breton Island. A curious woman popped out of a hatch with a camera. "Nice rig!" she called out.

"You too! Lots of cabin space!" I said.

"More for storage than for living," she said.

"If you like wooden boats, you should come over to the Bolger Memorial flotilla over there. We leave at 10:30," I said.

"OK. I'll keep it in mind."

After getting back to the dock and landing Jon and Henry, Frann and I shook out the reef and raised the main. We'd be able to use every square foot of canvas in this light wind. The crew returned from their brisk row and re-secured their craft. While we were rigging up, Henry discovered a 5' length of 6"x6" board which he slid into the water. I'm sure he enjoyed shoving off the hefty timber and watching it bob away, but it was going to be a real hazard to navigation. Any boat running into it would risk ramming a hole beneath the waterline, so I decided to row over and retrieve it.

Re-deploying the oars, pulling up the timber, returning to the dock, and arranging for one of the GMHC rowers to secure it took a few minutes in which time both Mason and Jon had sailed off with a 200-yard head start. We tried to catch up and sailed out as far as Ten-Pound Island.

On our way out a lobsterman tending his gear passed us, his helm set unattended but firmly in the middle of the channel. He looked up at us and nodded, waving curtly. "Nice boat," he said. I doubt if he knew about the Bolger Memorial, but he seemed to appreciate and understand the maritime heritage and wisdom that had gone into Micro's design. He seemed to agree with Phil's contention that pleasure boaters and commercial fishermen both had roles to play in Gloucester's future.

In our usual Buzzards Bay cruising grounds, the commercial shell fishermen rarely wave to us. From this lobsterman, from the Harbormaster's staff, the GMHC staff, and others, we felt welcome in our unconventional canvas-powered craft. Perhaps

these North Shore mariners had a greater appreciation for their boating heritage than the upper Cape Codders, whose shallow shores and lack of rail service were less hospitable to fishing fleets.

By this time it was almost 10am and I didn't want to be late for the departure of the flotilla, so we broke off from the other Micros. Commemorating Phil by sailing in the floating parade was my primary reason for coming. Besides, the opportunity to get a guided tour through the shallow tidal waters of the Annisquam, hitherto unknown to us, was a rare treat. As we neared the dock we saw that the *Terrapin* had already departed. Lance was shoving off in Howard Sharp's Chebacco. He waved and shrugged to us as if to say, "I took the offer of the boat that was leaving first." Lily and Seth Macinko's Tennessee had departed with Susanne and all the other passengers and the docks were empty.

So we shoved off again, bringing up the rear of the fleet. Bucking an incoming tide and with only a light breeze, the others sailed out deeper into the harbor where the breeze was a little stronger. I worried that we would slow the progress of the flotilla and I didn't want to delay the memorial occasion, so with the sails still up, I pulled out the oars again. I knew from our earlier sail that the new moon tide was flowing through the channel fairly strongly and the winds didn't compensate. I speculated that if I rowed close to shore with sails up and Frann at the helm, I'd be able to round Fort Point before the others. In my mind, a race was on and there's nothing I like better than having a chance at winning a sea chase!

I put my back into the strokes, raising some jolly music from a little bow-wavelet. The wind was nearly calm as we rowed in the lee of the big white Birdseye plant where frozen food was invented. Mason Smith's *Pelican* with its distinctive tanbark sails pulled into view well upwind of us, but half a mile or more out from the mouth of the Annisquam. The big Chebacco and the Tennessee were a bit ahead of us but significantly downwind, so I held some hope that when they made their way upwind towards us we wouldn't be too far behind.

As we rowed past the last few rocks of Fort Point the wind picked up and we were able to stow the oars and sail the rest of the way to the river. Martha Jane, with its big canvas, was at the rally point before us. But we beat everyone else! So we sailed back and forth on a beam reach while Susanne, Bruce Hallman, and Harry James took photos and video. Bruce ended up shooting over 250 high definition photos which are posted on

GMHC's rowing dory *Gannet* takes a turn around the harbor.



The author rows the Micro 2-by-2 at the GHMC for carbon-free docking. Note the stiff flag in the 30kt breeze.





<www.Flickr.com> under the tag line “BolgerMemorial” (one word). Full color high-resolution photos from this article (and more) are available there. Frann and I also took another 28 shots, including a nice one of Bruce rowing Seth’s Auray Punt, posted under the same tag.

The Tennessee passed by us and Bruce asked if we had a towline in the motorless 2-by-2. “You need to drop your sails and go through the bridge under motor power, according to Susanne,” he said. I felt bad to be a burden to the Tennessee but Bruce caught our line and Seth nimbly towed us through the channel. I reflected that I had broken the motor-only passage rule on Friday when I made my way from the ramp. Perhaps the bridge tender had realized that with both tide and brisk wind pushing me south, it would have been hard if not impossible for me to stop and claw my way north again, so he let me proceed. The Harbormaster’s office had told me nothing about the motor-only rule when I called. I’d told them that I was in a sailboat, they likely had assumed that I had an auxiliary motor. After the second drawbridge, the Railroad Bridge, all Bolger boats were accounted for, including Mason’s *Pelican*, towing Dave Irland’s Defender *Antonina*.

Susanne pointed out a prominent yellow house where the river turned, we were to follow that channel. So we sailors all raised our canvas. Mason extinguished his motor and the graceful flotilla sailed upriver with the tide. As we rounded the bend and eased the sheets, reaching quietly with full sails, I felt the spirit of Phil Bolger strongly. The sun shone clearly and beautifully, though the air was still crisp, and the tall arch of the Route 128 bridge framed rocky shores, glorious marshes, and boats upriver for several miles.

The four distinctive mizzen rigs were quietly joined by the fast, low, over-canvassed wooden boats of Harlan Robinson and Daniel Noyes. Harlan was also taking pictures, no doubt commemorating his dear friend Phil’s life work. The Kellys in their stretched Gloucester Gull fell in rhythm with us, as well as Walter Crocker’s Gull. A couple of other powerboats joined the Tennessee as we wended our way through the flooded marsh. We kept our voices soft, respecting the sad reason for our coming together. Our boats filled the role of a floating motorcade following a funeral. We made our dignified way upriver, following the Tennessee. Occasionally it paused and idled. Either Seth was waiting for the sailors to get more momentum or Susanne was making a comment about Phil’s activities on the waters at hand.

At a little cove to leeward, Susanne pointed us inland to the Montgomery Boat Yard. She looked out the stern of the Tennessee to tell the gathered Bolgerites that this was only a short walk away from Phil’s family home. Montgomery’s is where Phil joined his brother Bill, ten years his elder, to learn his first lessons about boat building and design under the mentorship of Nicolas Montgomery. Nick was the designer and builder of the Annisquam River Fish Class boats, very similar to Harlan Robinson’s boat. Nick’s son Herb, and later his grandson David, continued their relationship with Phil and for many years Phil kept his live-aboard boat, the *Resolution*, at the Montgomery docks. David was the builder of several of Phil’s designs, including Pirogue, and helped him experiment with different sail arrangements.

Then Susanne pointed upriver and, led by the Tennessee, we all ghosted back into the main channel. Several of the boats rode up parallel to Susanne, who chatted out the windows of the Tennessee, and in between conversations she snapped many photos. The tide was nearly slack and the breeze was often addled by houses, trees, and rocky outcroppings on the nearby shoreline. I had to ask for shore room once when one of the other boats, similarly de-powered by the absence of wind, drifted towards me. Rounding the last point before the channel, the stiff spartina grass swished against the hull and I feared running aground. But we caught just enough of a breeze to keep us going. No doubt Phil had also run aground at or near this same location, and the experience honed his appreciation for the Sharpie design with its flat, shallow bottom.

Onward we cruised, drawing the attention of many of the Sunday pleasure boaters. The unusually high tide had flooded a couple of cars parked at a beach launch and the waters lapped nearly to their axles. I was grateful that for this and all legs of the cruise, the 2-by-2 did not slow the parade down.

The maritime pilgrimage ended in a marshy bay offering an expansive prospect nearly devoid of visible development with abundant trees, wide waters threaded with channels shallow and shallower, and grassy islands. Perched on high ground before us was Phil and Susanne’s home, adorned by the white hull of the high-and-dry *Resolution*. We scanned the little islands and sandbars on which Phil looked each day. We imagined their appearance at low tide, or in winter, or in stormy weather. Susanne offered to take parties of us to shore in the dinghies to see *Resolution*, the master’s study, and his experimental hulls.

We dropped anchors and rafted up for a spectacular Bolger parley, which Bruce caught for posterity in a stunning photo. Dave Irland rowed groups of three or four to shore in the *Antonina*. The rest of us pulled out lunch and talked boats. Seth Macinko jumped out of the Tennessee and into the Auray Punt, sailing circles around us from a prone position with his head elevated. He claimed never to have dumped her. Meanwhile, the soft tones of a sea chantey sung by a man named Paco accompanied by concertina came from the *Lily*. Daniel Noyes in his Bolger-inspired mini-sandbagger rafted up to us, as did Chris Brunette rowing his Chubby Tubby canoe with its prominent running lights on little masts.

My grandfather’s 10lb Navy anchor held 2-by-2 just fine, but when the other two boats added their windage we started to drag. So I was compelled to drop the 30lb Fisherman, which would have held us all in a hurricane. I refreshed my resolution to get a 20lb anchor with plenty of chain for such situations in the future.

Mason and Maggie Smith, with a long drive home to the Adirondacks ahead of them, raised anchor and departed. I saluted them with two blasts of my father’s EZ-Blow galvanized horn. Its clamor resonated through the bay for a few seconds. Much as I was enjoying our conversation with Daniel and Chris, I was beginning to feel that we’d need to follow Mason downriver to get to the ramp before low tide. We had the d rigging, trailer light checking, and driving 50 miles home yet. So we politely evicted Dan and Chris once they’d finished their lunch



Bruce Hallman, builder of seven Bolger boats, rows Auray Punt in between taking hundreds of photos.



Tennessee tows Auray punt tender and motorless Micro; note raised drawbridge for Chebacco in distance.



Susanne points out Montgomery’s Boat Yard from deck of Tennessee.

Daniel Noyes sailed fast in his Bolger-inspired Mini-Sandbagger.





Phil and Susanne's house in West Gloucester. Note Phil's live-aboard *Resolution* high and dry.



Harlan Robinson in his Fish buzzes cars surprised by the new-moon tide at Jones River pier.

and sailed off. We gave another couple of blasts to Susanne and the party on shore and caught the fading breeze downwind.

We made steady progress until we pulled out of Jones Creek and into a narrow channel of the Annisquam with its 1kt counter-current. I had naively assumed that when the tide flowed, the entire Annisquam River and creek system flowed the same way and ebbing tide would offer favorable current all the way back to the ramp. But alas, I had much to learn about the calculus of the Annisquam's tidal currents in a new moon tide. It struck me that having lived in an area with an average 9' tide, Phil had an excellent laboratory for designing boats. His square sharpies with low ballasted keels or adjustable leeboards or centerboards cause minimal drag and multiple options on a boat when currents run contrarily through the shallows.

We tacked a dozen times and if we'd caught a puff we'd come close to a little flock of cormorants drying their wings on some rocks. If, on the other hand, we'd been hit by a big powerboat wake at the point of tacking, we'd be at least two tacks away from the cormorant's point. Although sailboats have right of way, I was timid about pressing my rights, as I want to stay on friendly terms with all mariners. In addition, I have a personal reason, which I'll mention later.

A motoring Micro would have no problem passing the cormorants, but we have only oars which I put to use again. We did pass the cormorants and the wind picked up and the current slowed in the more open waters. Soon though I had to pull out the oars again. As I dipped and pulled I scolded Frann, barking orders to trim the tiller this way or that, quickly apologizing for being such a "Captain Bligh." Frann understood and didn't mind my taking command, giving me carte blanche to boss her around as much as I felt necessary as she respected my boating judgment. I told her I'd prefer to stay in the habit of apologizing because we often sail with guests who find my bossiness when at the helm intolerable, including my sons and siblings.

As I stroked I saw a man driving a motorboat approach and slow down astern, quieting the motor enough to ask, "The question becomes, how far are you going?"

"The High School ramp," I answered in between strokes.

"You'll never make it," he said. "I'll tow you most of the way if your pride will allow it."

Immediately I accepted his offer, shipping the oars and going forward to re-secure the line we'd tossed the Tennessee. Frann was surprised and pleased at my quick acceptance.

"You were sailing when I first saw you. When you got stuck in the channel I decided you could use a tow," the motorboat captain said. So I accepted the tow and a frothy wake sprang up as the captain throttled up and the line tightened, riding obediently in the starboard chock next to the mast. Frann steered us right in the middle of the wake without any hint of porpoising or wobble. I stripped the sails as the last part of our trip home would be by motor and oars only. The captain paused at the Railroad Bridge, where I tried my VHS radio again. This time it worked and the tender lifted immediately, telling me to "Go ahead, captain!" It occurred to me that I wouldn't need to have bothered the tender, nor indeed the kind captain towing me, if I had tabernacled masts and a motor. I resolved to find the money and time to buy the Micro update plans from PB&F this winter and make these improvements.

Once on the other side of the bridge, where the tide was gently flowing the right way again, I gave the helpful captain a new shopping bag in gratitude, a promotional item from my employer.

"Not necessary!" he said, but he accepted it, much to my satisfaction.

"Maybe I will be able to do the same for you someday," I said.

"Or just help out the next person who needs it," he said.

"That's the way the world should be," said Frann, and the captain agreed.

We got to the ramp to see a swarm of boats all awaiting their turn to pull out onto their trailers. While I docked and started de-rigging, Frann consulted the ramp attendant. He confirmed that the upriver side of the float where we were was an ideal spot for me to dismast and secure the spars for towing. Frann also learned from her conversation that a boat just like ours had pulled out with its mainmast upright. It tangled with some tree branches and snapped into three pieces. It had to be Mason. I felt sorry for him but a boat builder of his acumen would have the

tools and knowledge to make a good repair. He confirmed his mast-snapping in an email. Indeed, by now, a scant two weeks since the Memorial, Mason told me that he'd made the repair and adjusted the rake to match the original plans more closely.

Meanwhile, Frann had to walk back to the GMHC to get the car. I secured everything on the 2-by-2. A previous fishing party at the ramp tossed the cleaned carcass of a 100lb tuna directly onto the face of the ramp, showing irreverence to the fish and disrespect to the mariners who followed. The dropping tide was exposing more and more of the fish each minute. My boat work done, I had nothing to do but wait for Frann to arrive so we could hitch up the trailer and haul out. So I decided to try to pull the fish over to the other side of the float where it would lie on the mud and be more readily scavenged by the waiting gulls, who eyed it greedily. They looked at me with deep suspicion, afraid that I would be absconding with the bonanza.

I was able to grab the clean, fresh fish at its tail and spine and lift it up to the dock. It smelled only of the healthy blue ocean without a taint of rot. Hours earlier this magnificent specimen was plying the Gulf of Maine at 50mph. The ramp attendant helped me pull it over the float the rest of the way to the other side where it was out of everyone's way.

Seth's Tennessee soon joined the queue and under the pressure of many impatient boaters behind him, needed the able help of crewmen Bruce Hallman and Harry James. These equally experienced ramp jockeys had some advice for Seth, now backing the trailer with his van. Seth exercised some of the same dictatorial tones that I had used, which we mariners know is every captain's privilege. "Guys, I know how to tow this boat," he said. I'm sure Bruce and Harry understood. Slowly but surely, up came the long, slim hull of the Tennessee, easily the longest boat at the ramp.

When he was up on the level pavement, Seth discovered that the craft was riding a few inches too far aft. So he alternately tapped the accelerator and the brake to make the Tennessee slide forward. Seth's braking was a bit too hard and the fair and well-built prow of the boat punched a little dent in the van's bumper, breaking the nose ring to which the trailer hoist strap connects. Seth





The Kelly's stretched Gloucester Gull hails George, Kim and Butterball on the Martha Jane.



Bolger sharpies approach beautiful arch of Route 128 Bridge.

decided he needed to take a quick trip to a hardware store to make the fix, spreading out three well-organized toolboxes. Bruce did bowman's duty, lying down and holding the nut still with an improvised socket wrench rig while Seth spun the nose.

While I had been poking my nose into the Tennessee's affairs, I glanced back at the 2-by-2 to see the disturbing sight of the bow elevated higher than the stern. The falling tide was about to strand us if I didn't get her afloat again right quick! Frann, who had just returned, and I tried to shove her deeper, but she was well-sucked into the mud. For the third time that day I had to swallow my pride and ask those in the motorboat ahead of us in line to try to drag us off the mud.

Again, I secured a towline, this time to the stern, while I got at the bow and pushed. They took up the slack and then juiced the engine up to about a quarter-throttle. While I couldn't make her slide deeper, I could rock

her back and forth and with each rock she seemed to move a bit more. I was creating a little quicksand beneath her and soon there was a lurch sternward and we were afloat again. Hooray! It was like hearing the sound of a car with a dead battery rev up to life with a jump from a helpful stranger. Again I thanked my motored rescuer, who refused my offer of a shopping bag this time.

We pulled out without much further incident, although we did break the trailer extension David Jost had designed to launch and retrieve Micro from shallow ramps. A sturdy rope around the mast and trailer wheel strut pulled her out just fine. I thought of an article I'd read of Phil's, showing his innovative forward-bumper-mounted hitch for launching and pulling out. The front hitch enables the driver to see exactly how to steer to make the trailer behave and meet the hitch ball cleanly. Furthermore, in a front-wheel drive vehicle the weight of the driver helps provide traction

back where it is needed at the base of the slippery, mossy ramp base. I realized that Phil had probably had several similar misadventures at this very ramp.

As we parted, several of us resolved to repeat the Memorial next summer. Of course, it is up to Susanne, but I know there are at least a score of Bolger builders, including many who weren't able to come this time, who would eagerly bring their boats should they have such an excuse again. It seems fitting that those of us who have benefited from the genius of Phil Bolger's designs should commemorate him on his own native waters. How appropriate it would be to make it an annual tradition to help bring to life Phil's dying wish that the waters of Cape Ann should forever thrive not only with marine industry, soon to be conducted with much more sustainable boats, but also with those of us who love simply messing about in boats, especially the thrifty and elegant ones designed and inspired by Phil Bolger and Friends.

The Bolger fleet: Auray Punt, Micro *Pelican*, Chebacco *Lily*, and Micro 2-by-2 anchor in the bay in front of Phil and Susanne's home.



On a sparkling clear sunny October weekend, over 300 small craft enthusiasts and more than 200 boats (at the organizer's last count) converged upon the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St Michaels, Maryland, for the 27th Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival.

"I've been coming for 25 of those 27 years," said boat builder Ronald Blackwell. "My kids used to play on the beach here, before they built the condos. My son Adam chose a career at sea and went to the New York Maritime College, I think because he so much loved the boats at these festivals. He's now serving as mate on a vessel somewhere near Crete. At one of these small craft festivals Adam met Liz, the woman who is now his wife." Mr Blackwell and his family brought several boats. One was a small pram that Mr Blackwell called "a little plaything" he'd built out of scraps leftover from a faering he'd built previously to an Ian Oughtred design. As we strolled down the wooden wharf to look at his pram, Liz came up to give her father-in-law a hug.



Small craft festival veteran Ronald Blackwell and his daughter-in-law Liz Blackwell.

John Brady, a boat builder of 25 years' experience, stood in the cockpit of the magnificent 33' Barnegat Bay catboat *Silent Maid*, a replica based on a 1923 design which the Independence Seaport Museum's Workshop on the Water commenced building in November 2004 and launched in June 2009. Asked what was the impetus behind building *Silent Maid*, he replied, "A guy gave us the money." She boasts an authentic brightwork finish like the 1920s original, the gunwales, spars, and enormous hull all a gleaming nut brown. Asked about keeping all that varnish in its shining perfection, he said, "That job I delegate."

*Silent Maid*, the Philadelphia Independence Seaport Museum Boat Workshop's spectacular 33' Barnegat Bay catboat reproduced from a 1923 design.



## 27th Annual Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival

By Jock Yellott

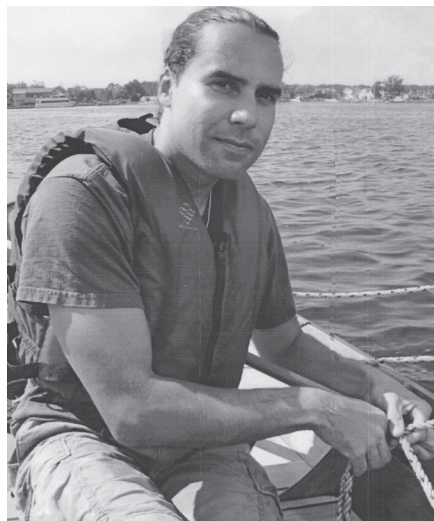


The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's iconic Hooper Strait Lighthouse, which once stood upon cast iron screw-piles augured into the Bay's muddy bottom.

Mr Brady reported that he and his crew enjoyed a comfortable night's sleep in *Silent Maid's* commodious cabin. Festival attendees with smaller, berthless boats roughed it in a tent city set up under a stand of pines outside the museum's west gate. Tents lined both sides of the museum's quarter-mile driveway. Some attendees arrived in St Michaels as early as Thursday to find choice spots in close proximity to old friends. There were reports of a squalling baby but most tents quieted down after dark by 11:00 and stayed silent under the bright full moon until in the morning the unzipping of sleeping bags heralded the dawn. That might have been a function of age, since the predominate age group seemed to be retirees.

Chesapeake Light Craft had trailered over from Annapolis several finished examples of their build-it-yourself kits, including a Wood Duck, a wherry outfitted with sliding seat rowing apparatus, a Skerry, and their gaff-rigged Pocket Ship which has proven to be an unexpectedly hot seller (they've sold

Matthew Cordrey expertly handles the tiller and sheet of CLC's Northeast Dory.



more than a dozen kits and just shipped a kit to France).

CLC's Matt Cordrey was very kind to launch a Northeast Dory and put her through her paces under sail in the gentle 5-8kt breeze at the request of your correspondent. Each time she gracefully came about in Matt's expert hands (he's a former Annapolis schooner crewman) I much less gracefully ducked under the low sail, finally resolving simply to sit on the floorboards. At one point Matt courteously, without remark, took the push-pull tiller from me to avoid a fiberglass yacht determined to motor to its mooring in front of us, right-of-way rules be damned.

We traveled out to join a fleet of dories, dinghies, peapods, melonseeds, sharpies, crab skiffs, cat boats, pinkies, an 18' miniature schooner, all looking like a distant flock of white-winged seabirds skimming the glistening waters. Some vessels from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's floating collection joined us. An elegant skipjack that found a welcome at the museum after her oyster dredging days were behind her carried a crew of tourists. Another of their traditional vessels, the log canoe *Marianne*, which is a racer intentionally designed to sacrifice stability for speed, barely balanced upright with human ballast levered out sideways on a plank.

At the other end of the size scale were dozens of knife-blade slender kayaks and several remarkable Rob Roy-style decked canoes, including an antique varnished lapstrake show-stopper with twin batwing sails hung in lazy jacks. Phil Cover, affiliated with the American Canoeing Association, remarked that fall is the best time of year for canoe sailing on the Chesapeake. Summer is not so good because a morning breeze shoves you out and if you're lucky another in the late afternoon might push you back, but there is seldom any wind in the middle of the long, sweltering day.

Among the tidbits I picked up from Mr Cover was that the American Canoeing Association owns an island in the Thousand Island chain in the St Lawrence River called Sugar Island. "It's one of the last refuges for old style sailing canoes," he said. Canada and the United States are still squabbling over which nation has sovereignty. "That's fine with us (canoe sailors)," said Mr. Cover. "So long as nobody knows who owns it, they can't sell it to developers."



Don Kerr of the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum's Wooden Boatbuilders School shows his strip-built sailing canoe. A trick of the trade: he says he rounded the mast in several sections "sized to fit my lathe" and then glued it together with dowels rather than "fool with a spokeshave."



Kudos to the festival organizers who seem to have got the whole shebang faired down smooth, everything from judiciously placed porta-potties to a nicely catered awards dinner. It was a delightful weekend of old friends and new, family, vessels built lovingly by hand, and thanks to the gracious hospitality of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, a lovely place to launch and enjoy them.



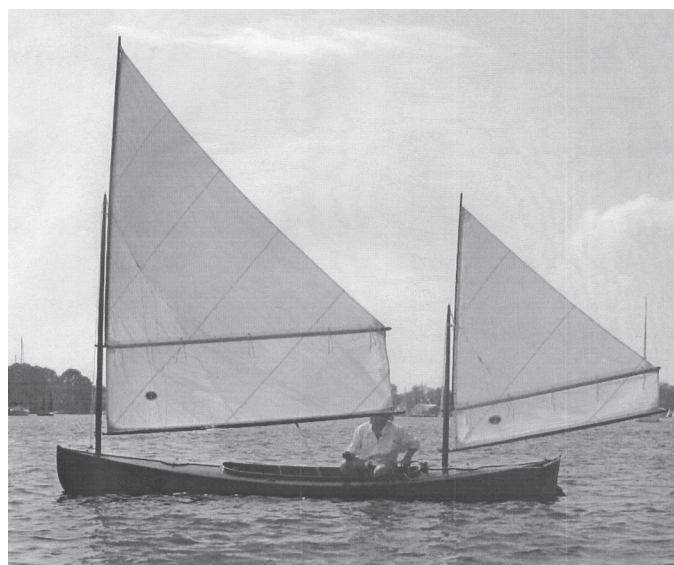
The 17th century 18' shallop reproduction *Little Key* from the Delaware New Sweden Center with its crew wearing authentic Colonial garb, though purists might debate the inappropriateness of sunglasses.



A choice spot for tents under the pines. A canopy on the right sports the sign: "Camp David."



Twin sprit-rigged vessel with a bone in her teeth.



One of several beautiful sailing canoes at the festival.



Looking for the right boat?

# The Apprenticeshop

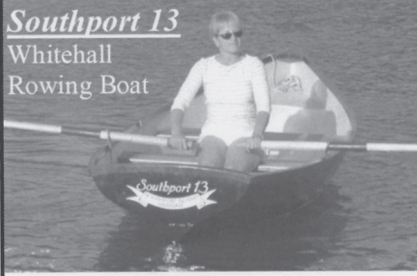
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September 12, 2009, was the date of the Second Annual Pleasant Beach Boat Show. H. and Bonnie Scoville, owners of the Pleasant Beach Hotel, are the sponsors of this small but growing event. This historic waterfront hotel and restaurant is located on Little Sodus Bay on Lake Ontario, about 35 miles east of Rochester, New York.

This informal gathering had boats of all sizes and descriptions. On shore display were runabouts, racing outboards, some small sailboats, a canoe display, and a Tancook whaler brought in on a trailer. She didn't make it to the water as she did last year, but she did make it to the show. In the water were schooners, sloops, skiffs, cruisers, a Tahiti ketch, a Bolger design double ender, and the schooner *Sara B*, the flagship of the event. Also in attendance was a pirate ship, of sorts.

This non-judged show is held on the second weekend in September and has grown from a handful of boats that just got together three years ago to what is now, with about 35 boats altogether. There are plans to promote the show more for next year and let more owners become aware of this genuinely fun event. It has grown by just word of mouth, and with a little promotion this could really develop into a much larger event.

## The Pleasant Beach Boat Show

By Greg Grundtisch

Little Sodus Bay is a very pretty body of water that is well protected and ideal for all types of boating. The historic Pleasant Beach Hotel, a B&B, is directly on the water and has a huge deck and balconies. It offers lunch and dinners to the public (the food is great, by the way) as well as for overnight guests.

The details of some of the boats in attendance are:

*Lotus* is a Sea Scout boat built in 1918, a 60' gaff rigged schooner. She is a William Hand design built in Rocky River, Ohio. She was donated to the Boy Scouts in 1971.

*Elhanor* is a 1935 Wheeler owned by Norm Vanderbilt. She is a Playmate model and has been in the Wheeler Family since 1935.

*Melodee* is a K boat was built approximately around 1968. She is owned by Mary Gwenn Todd. She was sailed for a few years and then Mary got married and stored her for 30 years. She just recently re-launched her. She is made of cedar and Philippine mahog-

any and designed by Murry Wright, a very successful and prolific builder/designer from Dundee, New York. This 16' sloop has a very pretty shape and a slightly upturned bow that looks similar to the profile of a Beetle cat. She is finished bright and looks almost brand new. And I couldn't find the photo I took of her!

The Tancook whaler is owned by Edgar Denton and is thought to be a Chapelle design. The builder is unknown. Her age is also unknown but looks to be '60s vintage.

*Rosie* is Susan Peterson Gately's St Lawrence skiff, likely at one time a livery skiff, close to 90 years old or so.

*Owl* was a surprise entry. She is a converted fiberglass sloop about 25' on deck. *Owl* travels from Florida to Lake Ontario attending Pirate events. She has real working cannons and gun ports.

*Ramsey's Dream* is a Tahiti ketch owned by the Ramsey Family. She was a father and son project. The father went to Maine to the WoodenBoat School and took a building course, then proceeded to build this beautiful boat. It took him 12 years but he finished her, and she looks great.

Next year with a little more promoting and advertising this looks to be an even better show. Hope to see you there. Happy sails!



*Owl*, the "Pirate Ship", a converted fiberglass sloop.

The Tancook whaler.



*Lotus*, a Tahiti ketch.

*Elhanor*, a 1935 Wheeler.







*Sara B.*



*Rosie*, a St. Lawrence skiff.

A Bolger designed double ender shows a Tancook influence.



Small craft collection on the lawn.







Army Hole has a small beach, it was crowded.

I've been camp-cruising in canoes and small boats for many years so I was naturally attracted to the emerging "raid" idea. For any readers who may not have heard the term, a "raid" is a scheduled event involving a substantial number of small boats traveling more or less in company from Point A to Point B over a period of several days, camping along the way at planned stops. I don't know where the term "raid" came from, there's nothing militaristic or pirate-like about this kind of raid. The word, if not the core idea, came from Europe. Perhaps "raid" has another connotation in French or Finnish.

In the European model, a raid is focused on row/sail boats and is organized to feature one or the other mode of propulsion at various times. It has a competitive dimension, but sharing the small boat cruising experience seems to be main goal rather than racing. As the raid idea migrated to North America, it has mutated to fit local preferences. The Shipyard School Raid in British Columbia closely follows the European model. The Everglades Challenge started with an emphasis on endurance racing for paddlers but has evolved to include sailing. There are other variations emerging in other places. The Small Reach Regatta in Maine is a few years old. 2009 will be the first year for the Florida 120 and the Outer Banks 130 in North Carolina is planned to debut in 2010.

2009 was the second year of the Texas 200, established by Chuck Leinweber, founder of the Duckworks website. Chuck competed in the Everglades Challenge several years ago and wanted to do more of that kind of thing. The Everglades, however, are a long trip from his home in Texas. Chuck thought he could organize a modified version of it right on the Texas Gulf Coast. Chuck doesn't call it a raid or a challenge. Rather than being focused on row/sail craft, it's an "anything goes" kind of event with survival rather than competition as the focus. Given the strong, favorable wind there's also no incentive to retain the rowing component.

Chuck appreciated the physical and mental challenges of the Everglades Chal-

## A Californian Does The Texas 200

By Kim Apel  
Photos and Captions by Chuck Leinweber



Kim and Marty sally forth in the Core Sound 17.

lenge, but was looking for something with a broader appeal than its hyper-competitive, hyper-demanding format, but not as soft and civilized as the European raid model. The European model for a raid includes an organizing committee, advance notification of appropriate government authorities, beautiful pedigreed craft, entry applications, fees, an approval and invitation process, safety requirements and inspections, escort boats, catered meals and wine, campground reservations, sanitary facilities, scenic routes, evening entertainment, competitive scoring, and trophies. It's all very organized, civilized, and sophisticated, and not what Chuck had in mind.

In contrast, the Texas 200 projects a uniquely Texas character. It's come-as-you-are, no fees, no rules, no prestige, rough-and-tumble, barren, primitive, muddy, salt-caked, hot-and-sweaty, any-

thing-goes, you're-on-your-own, survival-of-the-fittest, no-time-to-eat, falling-down-tired, cowboy-sailing. It's rodeo on the water minus the spectators.

Chuck planned the route and outlined the concept. The Texas 200 begins in Port Mansfield, near the southernmost tip of Texas on the Gulf of Mexico, and runs north for five days and about 200 miles roughly along the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) to Magnolia Beach, Texas. He first publicized the proposal in 2007 on the Duckworks website and the idea caught on immediately. A separate website was established just for the event. Despite \$4 per gallon gas in the summer of 2008, about 40 boats and 60 people showed up from all over the US.

This is an example of something that could never have happened before the internet. I watched the whole thing evolve online, skeptically at first. The success of the 2008 event led to the decision to repeat it in 2009. I read the website accounts, saw the photos and videos posted online, and decided I had to be there. So did others.

The course and timing are chosen for a reason. In June on the Texas Gulf Coast the wind typically blows steady and strong from the south to southeast. The course lies generally northward, within the barrier islands that buffer the Texas coast. The result is mostly downwind sailing in mostly "protected" water. June is after the season of spring thunderstorms and before hurricane season, eliminating those extreme scenarios. The downside is that June in south Texas is hot and humid.

In this case, consistent downwind sailing doesn't mean a casual effort. Even under ideal circumstances, averaging 40 miles per day over five days is a challenge for small sailboats. As Chuck says, "When you finish (he could have said "if you finish") you'll know you've done something."

My friend Dan and I decided that we had to go. He claims I talked him into it, I remember it the other way around. Dan likes to sail solo and he had plenty of time to make the 3,600-mile round trip drive from California. I had a suitable boat, but the



drive was daunting. Knowing my dilemma, Chuck referred me to Marty Williams of San Antonio who had a newly-built Core Sound 17 (CS17), named *Cuyahoga* for the infamous river of his native Cleveland. Marty had limited sailing experience but, like me, the website images and stories had hooked him. He needed an experienced crew member and camp organizer. We talked on the phone and formed our team. I would fly to Texas and Marty would meet me at the airport. It's risky committing a week of vacation to traveling in close quarters with a near stranger, but we plunged ahead.

The day finally came. I flew from Los Angeles to Corpus Christi, Texas, met Marty, and drove on a few more hours to Port Mansfield, an isolated coastal village on about the same latitude as Miami. We poked around town meeting other sailors, admiring their boats, figuring out where to launch, and finding some dinner. Dan had arrived from California.

There was no actual roster of confirmed participants. The skipper's meeting on Sunday morning was the first solid indication of the size of the event. I counted about 55 people. More would arrive later. Mostly it was older guys but there was a gratifying (and a little surprising) representation of seven or eight women. There were husband-wife, girlfriend-boyfriend, father-daughter, and mother-daughter crews. Ages ranged from an 11-year-old boy and some teenagers to a 75-year-old who was sailing solo. The sailors had come from about 11 states, from coast to coast, and a bunch from Texas, of course. Two French expatriates working in Houston were there; the French, as you may know, are always up for extreme sailing exploits.

If the event ends 200 miles from where it starts, there needs to be a way for the sailors' vehicles and trailers to be at the end when they get there. Most participants launched their boats, then drove four hours to Magnolia Beach where a charter bus was waiting to bring them back to the start. It took all day. Some made alternate arrangements.

At the skippers' meeting Chuck took the roll of those signed up for the bus shuttle and distributed maps to Magnolia Beach. Next, rather than a welcome speech, or a navigational briefing, or dos-and-don'ts, or advice what to do if something goes wrong, or pleas for this or that, Chuck stood on a boat still on its trailer and politely reminded us all of the central idea of the Texas 200, that this would be a group cruise, that in the event of any problems we would try to help each other, but that help or rescue was not assured and the fleet would not wait or return for those who may fall behind. The principle is called "no controlling authority." Protecting Chuck from legal liability for the mishaps of the unprepared or unlucky is part of the reason. Practically, however, if there was any hope of getting to the end in five days, it couldn't be any other way.

Marty drove to Magnolia Beach and rode the shuttle back. I tended to *Cuyahoga* and mostly sat in the shade in shorts and T-shirt, reading a crime novel, trying to acclimate to the unaccustomed heat and humidity and to not get sunburned. I got sunburned anyway in the shade, apparently from reflected UV radiation off the nearby water. The power of the semi-tropical sun should not be underestimated. The heat was uncomfortable, but to a fair-skinned guy like me the sun was



Joseph Castiglioni of College Station, Texas, braves the bay in his Windrider 17 trimaran.



Laurent Coquilleau of Houston, Texas, came limping in around 2am under jib alone after breaking a rudder, ripping his mainsail, and dropping his mast. He had to paddle an hour and a half to shore to make repairs. Who is this guy?



Bryan Cull joined us at PIYC (Padre Island Yacht Club) with a brand new Raid 41 called *Platypus* designed by Michael Storer. Bryan had planned to join us at Port Mansfield but did not get finished in time. Here the boat is going into the water for the first time. In spite of the fact that he is a very experienced sailor, Bryan only got about a dozen miles before losing his boat in an unfortunate incident. He is fine and the boat was recovered.

As we approached John Wright's boat in Matagorda Bay, he appeared to be asleep.



the bigger threat. After this initial miscalculation I covered up everything, all day, every day, in addition to sunscreen lotion.

**Day 1:** After much anticipation, preparation, and travel, 8am Monday, June 8 was, at last, time to cast off and sail. No time for breakfast, nor any appetite for it, maybe it was the heat. We joined a rabble of 46 sailboats and two powerboat escorts converging from various points within and outside of the harbor, embarking on the broad, shallow Laguna Madre. The low barrier islands to the east were over the horizon, it looked like the open sea. At the helm, Marty was nervous as the wind picked up and the boat kicked up a little spray. We followed the navigation markers until the channel turned north and the wind came aft. Marty's CS17 performed well and we passed a number of other boats in the fleet.

As the day warmed the wind and waves increased. After several hours the Laguna Madre gradually narrowed, the barrier islands merged with the mainland, and the navigation channel entered the "land cut," a man-made canal about 200' wide like others throughout the intracoastal waterway. With only low sandy plains on its banks, the following wind remained strong but the waves diminished, making for fast, easy sailing, or so we thought.

We passed a few boats pulled over to the beach attending to one sort of gear issue or another, like Phil and Andrea, with their mast down. We passed within hailing distance but they waved us on. We saw the reason and heard their story later. Sailing along, relaxed at finally making the land cut and with his forward visibility constrained, the yard of his lug sail struck a navigation marker, the shock was transferred through the mast to the mast partner, which split, and the freestanding mast was suddenly unsecured, held up only by the pressure of the following wind. If it had been me, I would have been waving for help. Instead, Phil set about improvising an ingenious jury rig with a sort of Spanish windlass involving many turns of rope and a tightening mechanism.

This was also where our problems began. The kick-up rudder seemed not to be fully down. Marty told me to pull vertically on the attached line, which I did with such dumb gusto that I pulled the rudder out of its gudgeons. Doh! By the time I got the rudder back in place we were on the muddy leeward shore. We pushed off, back into the channel, only to find the rudder was still up and the control line wouldn't bring it down. A 15-20kt breeze pushed us to the lee shore again.

Closer inspection of the rudder revealed that the pin on which the lower part rotates was out of its bushing. It was a blind fit and, short of some prying and pushing and dumb luck, there was no way to get it the pin back in its bushing, thus no way to make the rudder stay down. I was beginning to have dark thoughts when Phil and Andrea, freshly repaired, pulled in beside us and offered to help. They had some tools and spare hardware. We accepted a few wood screws and crudely fixed the formerly kick up rudder in the down position. Back in business, thank you Phil and Andrea.

Getting off the shallow lee shore was harder with a fixed rudder. Marty was standing in the water, trying to position the bow for a clean getaway. As he walked the boat toward water deep enough for the rudder, the dredged channel dropped away suddenly, the

wind filled the sails, and we were accelerating with Marty hanging over the side, the pressure of the water making it hard for him to get aboard by himself. He ended up back at the transom, the boat surging forward, even with sheets eased.

I figured I had only a few seconds before the situation got even worse. I dropped the tiller, grabbed Marty by his PFD, and pulled him over the transom. We were sailing again, with a mixture of relief that we were back under control and horror at the unseamanlike spectacle we had just committed getting off the beach. I've been sailing long enough to have been humbled by many such gear failures and misjudgments. I try to let them roll off my back and focus on the next challenge. Fairly new to sailing, Marty was not expecting this kind of thing. I think he was a bit shaken by it.

Then it got worse. There was a sickening cracking noise and the main (fore) mast fell, tipping forward. Back to the beach again. At least the mast didn't break, the step had pulled out. Marty could hardly believe it. He'd built and tested this boat and it had broken twice in half an hour. I was trying to be upbeat but it was all quite a blow.

We laid the mast down the middle of the boat, secured it, and continued under mizzen alone. We wondered if the problem was repairable, and if not, should we drop out? We were a long way from the truck and trailer.

Optimism seemed unfounded, the best we could manage was a neutral wait-and-see attitude. The boat actually handled OK under mizzen alone with a strong breeze to push us along.

We made it to the first camp at Happ's Cut. There was a long, wide beach with plenty of space and a few vacation cottages nearby. The cottages were noteworthy because, since Port Mansfield, except for navigation markers and a few non-Texas 200 boats, there were few signs of civilization. The barrier island is part of Padre Island National Seashore, the mainland is the famous King Ranch, the largest private landholding in the US. There's a semi-wilderness feel along much of the Texas 200 route that I really like. So far we had encountered no commercial traffic. Happ's Cut is in a very remote area of Padre Island. Access to the cottages is by boat only.

I take some pride in being able to prepare good hot camp food and I came prepared to do that. It was a surprise, then, that neither Marty nor I had any appetite or energy to prepare such a meal, despite eating next to nothing all day. Cooking seemed an absurd notion to us and almost everyone else in camp. We each had a ham sandwich. It was enough. It was the same every day. We were up at first light, in a hurry to get on the water as early as possible. We never had a real breakfast or lunch, just a piece of fruit or some peanuts

when we could manage it. I can't do that at home but it seemed normal at the Texas 200.

Happ's Cut, as the last of the fleet arrived that evening, was the first time that (almost) everyone had been together in the same place. I counted 44 boats. There was an amazing variety of sailing craft and people. The boats, ranging from 8' to 30' long, had one, two, or three masts on one, two, or three hulls. There were home-builts and production craft. There were many stories of new boats that had been completed just in time or older boats rehabbed just in time to launch for this event. There were familiar designs, production and home-built. There were marvelous (and odd) one-of-a-kind, owner-designed boats. Personality and creativity, craftsmanship and determination, as expressed through boats, were on display everywhere.

Repairs were underway on a number of beached boats. Marty searched out Charlie Jones, well-known Texas small boat sailor and builder, including being builder of several CS17s like Marty's. Charlie inspected the damage to *Cuyahoga* and pronounced that it was probably repairable with supplies that could be obtained during our second night's stop at Padre Island Yacht Club. Things were looking up.

We heard that several boats had dropped out. Our expected powerboat escorts were nowhere to be seen. Tom Best's Sea Pearl 21, a boat with a solid reputation



### The PDRacers

The PDRacers left pretty early Monday morning but we managed to catch up with them. Counterclockwise from top left as we overhauled them are: Jason Nabors, Kevin Allison of Houston, Texas, in his Duck'n Out, Andrew Linn from all the way up in Salem, Oregon, in his Salem Electron with the distinctive reverse sheer, Gordo Barcomb of Lake Jackson, Texas, and finally Jon Kowitz from Spokane, Washington, in his Ranger.



The PDRacers made a point of arriving in camp each afternoon or evening in a group. Here they land at Happ's Cut, Camp 1.





in events like this, had capsized and lost its rig in Laguna Madre. I didn't know it at the time, but as I walked the beach a drama was playing out with a boat that had failed to make it to Happ's Cut. Dismasted and believed to have withdrawn, Laurent Coquilleau and his proa recovered, after hours of solo struggle, re-embarked, sailed under a full moon, and caught up with the fleet in the middle of the night.

At this point, I need to explain to anyone who may be unaware what is a Puddle Duck Racer (PDR). The PDR is an 8'x4' box-boat that makes Bolger's boxes seem elegant by comparison. Indeed, the PDR was inspired by Bolger's boxy designs taken to the extreme. It is as simple and crude and cheap as a sailboat can possibly be. There were five in the '09 Texas 200, a fleet within the fleet.

The PDR provides a useful first time experience to sailor/builders with little money or skills but ambition to try something and thereby gain useful experience. This worthy concept has its place. What may strain one's understanding is that the PDR has attained a kind of cult following. The cult's adherents have no illusions about the PDR's crudity. They appreciate, and may even own and sail, more refined designs. They embrace the PDR anyway. Some in the PDR cult have adopted the Texas 200 as a class event. Confounding the skepticism of many, including myself, three PDR sailors finished the original '08 Texas 200 and five PDR sailors were in the 2009 Texas 200 fleet, including several returning for a second attempt. Their amazing experiences merit their own separate magazine articles.

The PDR guys already know that an 8' box is inappropriate for a 200-mile passage in five days along the Texas coast, at least according to the normal criteria of speed, safety, and comfort. They know that it's an eccentric thing to do (crazy is such a harsh word) and they do it anyway, with exuberance and panache. They do it to prove that it can be done and that they are tough enough to do it. They sail together and look out for each other. They suffer and succeed together. Somehow they exemplify the spirit of the Texas 200.

**Day 2:** On the semi-tropical south Texas coast there is no midsummer early sunrise. We arose at first light and launched hastily at 0700 under reefed mizzen alone. Whether or not the mast step could be repaired, it appeared that we could probably finish this way if necessary. It was slow going, however, and not much fun being passed by most of the fleet.

The dolphins rescued the day. Many boats in the fleet, including ours, were surrounded by dolphins for a half hour or more, swimming around and under the boats and reportedly bumping some boats, playfully we think. It's one thing to see dolphins on TV or at Sea World, it's another to have them all around almost at arm's reach. These were 300lb wild carnivores, after all, not pets or TV actors.

Finally emerging from relative wilderness into the urban fringe of Corpus Christi, we made our second landfall as guests of the Padre Island Yacht Club. The Texas 200 fleet overflowed the PIYC docks, its seawall, grounds, and clubhouse. In contrast with the primitive surroundings of the previous night, we were blessed with an air-conditioned clubhouse, showers, and a choice between a ride to a local restaurant or dinner delivered to the clubhouse. I rode to "Snoopy's" sea-

food restaurant with 20 or so others piled into an RV. Appetite restored, I had four kinds of fried food on a single plate and lots of good conversation on the side.

Bryan Cull showed up at Snoopy's with his new boat, a "Raid 41" dinghy by Australian designer Michael Storer, fresh from the shop, meaning that day. After weeks of intensive effort he hadn't finished in time to start at Port Mansfield so he was joining the fleet en route. It was still in its bare epoxy coating, paint would have to come later. The Raid 41 design was inspired by the first Texas 200 and designed specifically for solo raid entries. Bryan was determined to complete the first boat of the new design and launch it at the second Texas 200, even if that meant joining on Day 3. His sleek, pristine, new boat attracted much attention in the parking lot.

Back at the docks, with a combination of donated epoxy resin and other materials gathered by Marty in a trip to the store and the generous help of Charlie Jones, the broken mast step was rebuilt. Phil and Andrea's boat had made it through the day with Phil's jury-rigged mast, but barely. So, with materials gathered from a trip to the hardware store, he also made a solid repair. A number of others were busy with repairs well into the evening. That night we "slept the sleep of the just," the just-repaired, just-showered, and just-fed. I drank about a gallon of water that evening, replacing all that I had lost in the day's heat.

**Day 3:** No breakfast, 0730 launch. No more straight-line cruising down the ICW corridor. This day we had to navigate correctly timed turns to port and starboard with the likelihood of encountering commercial traffic as we passed through Corpus Christi Bay. We formed a buddy group of three boats. With our restored but untested mast step, we set out with reefed sails, though the breeze was mild at first. Soon we left the ICW to take a shortcut with less exposure to shipping traffic. It crossed an open bay, however, and as the day warmed and the wind increased to 20+ knots, the waves built up. Here is where I learned that describing the Texas 200 as occurring in "protected water" is a relative term. Perhaps it was even rougher five miles away in the Gulf of Mexico, but Corpus Christi Bay did not feel protected to me. It was all we could do to maintain control.

That much wind blowing over shallow (6-7') water creates a more difficult wave pattern than on the open ocean. The waves were "only" 3-5' high, but the crests were close together and the wave faces were steep. It was a white-knuckle ride. I'll take open ocean swells over that any day. I'd sailed in conditions like that before, but in a 30' keelboat, not a 17' open skiff. We took some green water over the side once but *Cuyahoga* took care of us as well as could be expected.

We were headed for a gap between Pelican and Mustang Islands, a place called Stingray Hole (love that name). Beyond these islands we would enter the Corpus Christi shipping channel, turn to starboard, and get some relief from the wind and waves in the lee of Mustang Island. As we approached the gap a ship passed in the channel, inbound to Corpus Christi. It would be well past by the time we entered the channel, no problem, right?

Then I saw something ahead that at first I could not comprehend. We were headed toward a line of 6-7' left-breaking surf that hadn't been there a moment before. My first

thought was, "That can't be, we're miles from where the surf ought to be." An instant later my second thought was, "&%4@\* your analysis, it's surf and you're headed for it. Do something now." The wind was pushing harder than ever from behind so there was no going back.

Holding course would take us right into the center so the choices were to veer port or starboard. First we went to starboard, thinking the surf would diminish behind as it moved left, but new waves kept forming there. Then we went to port, trying to get ahead of the breaking waves. Fortunately we were carrying plenty of speed and could maneuver effectively. We passed over three 6' waves in quick succession, but they were round on top, not breaking, so we passed through without taking on a drop. It all happened in less time than it takes to tell about it. The rest of our buddy group was likewise fortunate.

In hindsight, I misjudged the hazard of the passing ship, it was the wake, not getting run down that was the threat in this case. A ship's wake in deep water may be bad enough, but when that wake encounters shallow water, such as in the gap between the islands, it rises and breaks like surf on an ocean beach. Like any boat wake, I suppose, except this one was Texas-sized.

That excitement behind us, we turned to starboard, outbound down the shipping channel, and had an easy close reach for a while. Here we picked up a fourth boat in our buddy group, Pete and Tom in another CS17. We learned later that they had been on the beach when the ship passed, perhaps an even worse scenario than ours. The waves that came ashore could have rolled or swamped their boat as it rested on the beach but they quickly pushed off the beach, bow toward the oncoming waves, holding the boat on either side in chest deep water so that the wave might lift the boat as it passed. With quick thinking and action they dodged the bullet.

Later, after dancing with a pair of car ferries, we all turned to port, into the Lydia Ann Channel, leading to Aransas Bay. The bay turned windy and rough again, but after the experiences of that morning we were somewhat desensitized. It seemed almost routine. Our expanded buddy group of four, three CS17s, and Phil and Andrea in their modified Michalak design, sailed in company, searching for the next night's camp at a place called Paul's Mott.

A "mott" in the lingo of the Texas Gulf Coast is a piece of relatively high ground in the otherwise flat and marshy landscape. Not a hill, mind you, just a spot more than 3' above sea level. We left the dredged navigation channel and experienced the shallow natural character of the coastal bay. Even a half mile off the beach we were occasionally bumping our centerboard on the bottom, a low-tech shallow water warning system that we used to protect our rudder since it had necessarily become fixed on Day 1.

We arrived at Paul's Mott, or more precisely the oyster shell beach near Paul's Mott, a long spit extending into the bay. The T200 fleet gathered on the leeward side, beached or anchored, according to the boat's draft. I knew of sand, gravel, and cobble beaches, but this was my first experience with a shell beach. Thousands of years of accumulated oyster shells, broken into pieces by wave action and weathering, produce a beach notably unfriendly to bare skin and tents. It was a beautiful spot, though and we were glad to

have it, in comparison to the surrounding unprotected and damp shoreline. The fleet made an impressive show lined up tightly along the beach, a forest of masts in the sky.

Neither Marty nor I had said a word all day about the repaired mast step, though it was on both our minds. Not that either of us believe in “jinxes,” it just seemed better to leave it alone. A friendly passerby on the beach broke the silence, attempting to make polite conversation, “Well, it looks like your mast repair held up today.” Marty and I looked at each other and winced a little at hearing the words spoken so brazenly, but hey, we’re here! I guess he’s right. That bit of suppressed anxiety was swept away, we didn’t worry about it anymore.

We heard that Bryan Cull and his Raid 41 had capsized that morning. Even though the Raid 41 is designed to be easily recovered from a knockdown, and even though Bryan is a very experienced sailor, an unexpected twist ended their big day. Bryan righted the boat but in the strong winds and steep waves, he reached out to recover a nearby floating boat cushion, fell out of the boat, and the boat sailed away from him, held upright for the moment by its water ballast. The boat was spotted later, minus its crew, which caused obvious concern and a call to be placed to the Coast Guard. Bryan was later picked up by Chuck Leinweber, standing in 4’ of water. The Coast Guard was called off but not before a commercial towing service heard the call, responded, and recovered Bryan’s boat as salvage. Bryan got his boat back, albeit at a steep price, and with a hard lesson, freshly cured epoxy over plywood, splashed with water, is way too slippery for the cockpit or deck of a sailboat.

Late in the day Mike Monies arrived at Paul’s Mott in his 12’ Bolger Cartopper, looking much too small to have come alone across Aransas Bay on a day like that. Hours before Mike had endured capsize and dismasting but had the good fortune to do so near Carl and the PDR fleet. Carl helped Mike to shore and there the PDR guys shared their spare parts and amazingly got Mike back underway. One part of this remarkable story involved shortening a donated mast with an axe. Mike was then supposed to find some civilization, phone for help, and withdraw, but he didn’t.

Last of all, the PDRs came over the horizon of Aransas Bay, sailing in formation, five across, like a D-Day invasion fleet. They hit the windward beach together just before sunset, greeted by cheers and congratulations and snapping cameras, a welcome given to no other boats. It was a beautiful sight. After 12 or so hours on the water the PDR guys were still cheerful and enthusiastic. I can’t tell you what respect I have for these guys as sailors and men.

Dan and some others never arrived at Paul’s Mott. I couldn’t raise Dan on our little VHF. I didn’t have his cell phone number and we were way out in the boonies in any case. I wasn’t too worried about Dan as I knew no one was more experienced or had a more capable or better prepared boat. I assumed that he was holed up safely somewhere.

**Day 4:** After deliberations and a decision the evening before, Marty and I and two other boats withdrew from the Texas 200 and headed for Marty’s family’s beach/vacation house in Rockport, 12 miles across the bay. The prediction for Day 4 was more high wind and shallow-water navigation challenges. Most of the fleet had no reason-

able bailout option, but Marty did. He took it and extended an offer of shelter to others who had had enough “banzai” sailing. I would have continued but I supported my skipper’s decision.

Bailing out in Rockport turned out to be not as easy as it sounded. We had a challenging half-day getting to our destination. The last several miles were upwind against the same strong wind we’d faced all week, or rather, that had been behind us all week. Attempting to sail close-hauled under reefed main alone, with the sprit distorting what little sail we had up, we made slow progress to windward with constant spray over the side.

Six sailors and three boats finally landed at Marty’s comfortable house with a dock on a canal leading out to Copano Bay. Though he lives inland in San Antonio, this is where Marty usually does his sailing. A rental car was soon arranged to make the trip to Magnolia Beach to retrieve the trucks and trailers. Rigging was stowed. Gear and clothing were cleaned and dried.

Bits of information were gleaned from cell phone calls about the fleet still en route. Day 4 was proving as tough as expected. The approach to Ayres Dugout (a shallow passage between islands) was the scene of both heroism and bitter disappointment. John Turpin’s West Wight Potter was destroyed on an uncharted reef, while Bobby Chilek, in similar peril, was saved by the intervention of fellow sailors.

There was one unexpected and wonderful twist. Cathy and Meredith Wright, a mother-daughter team in a 12’ O’Day Widgeon, were pressing forward despite rough conditions and a rudder gudgeon screw that had to be retightened over and over. Finally the gudgeon was hanging by a thread and when it failed, it would be over, no more tightening, no more rudder. It was time to retire.

They went ashore at Hopper’s Landing (three houses and a stray dog says Cathy) and started to walk, hoping to get a ride somehow to Magnolia Beach and then return to retrieve their boat. Cathy made some cell phone contacts and, through a chain of referrals, on the fifth call finally connected with Marty Williams, whom she didn’t really know, but was reported to have withdrawn in nearby Rockport. By fortunate coincidence, Marty took the call while in a rental car on his way to pick up his truck and trailer via a nearby highway.

Cathy and Meredith hitchhiked out to the main highway, rendezvoused with Marty, who took them to Magnolia Beach where they retrieved their car and trailer, then their boat, then went back to Marty’s for showers, and then finally joined us (now a party of eight) for a great dinner at The Big Fisherman restaurant. For a bunch of supposedly defeated Texas 200 dropouts, we were sure having a good time. I had a hard time remembering why, just a few hours before, I had felt reluctant to drop out. I rose and proposed a toast, “Let us toast our friends camping tonight on Matagorda Island... tired, sweaty, unwashed, poorly fed, beaten but unbowed. May tomorrow they safely reach the end of their journey and attain the glory they so richly deserve.” Actually, I offered no toast, but I should have.

We’d received some news from the fleet that day, but nothing about Dan. Later, back at the house I recalled, now that I was reunited with my possessions left behind in Marty’s truck, that I did have Dan’s cell

phone number on a slip of paper. I called Dan and awoke him from a sound sleep. He was safely tied up in a marina in Rockport a few miles away! We caught up on the events of the past two days and agreed to meet the next day, if possible.

**Day 5:** After a good night’s sleep at the beach house, boats were retrieved on trailers and the group went their various ways. Some went to join the fleet for a shrimp boil and end-of-cruise party at Magnolia Beach. Some headed home. We cleaned up the house pretty well, only the full trash cans gave evidence of the visit of eight wayward sailors. Later, Marty’s extended family arrived for the weekend. Marty and I picked up Dan and had him over for dinner. He regaled us with stories of his trip, including the drive from California, which lurched from oppressive heat and crushing boredom to worry, pain, mechanical failure, frustration, and finally redemption. The next morning Marty took me to the airport and it was over.

**Epilogue:** For weeks following the Texas 200, I thought about the experience every day, trying to figure out what it all meant. I wasn’t there, but I understand that 32 of the 48 or so boats that launched actually finished at Magnolia Beach. That’s a sobering ratio. There were sailors of all degrees of experience and boats of all degrees of suitability for a challenging course. It’s noteworthy that the boats that were disabled and crews that withdrew were not necessarily the least experienced or least suited to making such a trip. Several boats and skippers that should have succeeded did not. Some of the most vulnerable succeeded. The sea, it seems, decides whom it will punish, or not. We can be prepared and determined, but we do not control everything.

John Miller had returned for a second year. His first attempt was a cascade of spectacular missteps leading to withdrawal. Year 2 was a smooth success. Experience counted, of course, in John’s success, but how would he have gained it without Year 1? Even though I knew the record of the ‘08 Texas 200 and heard the warnings, I admit that, when in the midst of all the problems and boat carnage, I was concerned. Didn’t the havoc mean that something was wrong? With all its foreseeable risks, was the Texas 200 maybe a bad idea? It certainly might be open to criticism that changes are needed in the future to mitigate those risks. I can imagine that in California, where I live, and perhaps elsewhere, there would be complaints, criticism, and perhaps worse.

It might surprise you, then, to learn that the Texas 200 participants, as far as I can tell, feel no inclination to criticize the event or to tame its wild character. Rather, the website accounts acknowledge, but do not over-dramatize, the difficulties. The accounts written by those suffering the worst misfortune of all do not criticize, blame, or express regret. Rather, they express gratitude for the help they received in their distress. Along with some healthy self-evaluation of the 2009 event, talk on the website forum also turned to plans for next year.

Perhaps those attracted to the Texas 200 are not typical sailors. Perhaps they are looking for an adventure and a challenge a step or two beyond what the common sailor regards as “fun.” These are sailors who might be crossing oceans or setting records if it weren’t for middle-class jobs and mortgages





Chris and Kelly Tomsett in their brand new Jim Michalak Caroline.

Yves Nerisson of Houston, TX sails out of the yacht club Wednesday morning in his brand new Northumbrian Coble.



David's beautiful enlarged Bolger in the Lower Laguna Madre.

Kevin and Matthew head out on Thursday, destination Army Hole.



and families and, for some, if it weren't 30 years too late. So they do what they can.

They show up for a modest but real adventure with real risks, obstacles, and discomforts and with real accomplishment at the end, if they get there. They probably wouldn't attempt it solo but there is a measure of moral support that comes from being part of a group and the added social dimension makes it more fun. They know that if problems arise there may or may not be material support, depending on luck and circumstance. It's like life in that way. They expect no praise or attention if they succeed, nor sympathy if they don't. They know it makes no sense to most people.

**Next Year:** No one wants to change the program but there is recognition that change may come whether it is wanted or not. Can the event continue to grow? Can the "no-sponsoring-authority" idea continue to work? It remains to be seen. There may be just the hint of a safety net in the form of a designated "drop-out coordinator."

The designs of Jim Michalak have been well-represented in the Texas 200 fleets and have had notable success. Chuck has commissioned a new Michalak design expressly for the Texas 200, named the Laguna. It is a 23'x5.5' lug-rigged ketch, an oversized skiff adapted to the specific conditions of the

Texas 200 (<http://www.duckworksbbbs.com/plaiis/iim/la,~una/index.litin>). As of this writing, one has already been launched and several others are said to be in the works. There is talk of actually building one or more on the beach in the days before the event (rig, rudder, and other selected pieces built in ad-

vance). Puddle Ducker Andrew Linn concedes this idea has a certain rough appeal to him but only, he says, if the hull is given a Viking funeral (burned) at the after-party at Magnolia Beach. Honest, I can't tell if he's serious. Yeah, I think I'll be back next year, and I hope to finish.

## Wanna See More?

More detailed narratives from the perspective of other sailors, successful and otherwise, as well as photographs and video clips are logged on the Texas 200 website and some other websites listed below. Also links to similar "raid" events around the world.

Raid Finland: <http://www.raidfinland.com/main.html>

Shipyard School Raid: <http://www.shipyardraid.ca/>

Everglades Challenge: <http://www.watertribe.com/EvergladesChallenge/EvergladeschallengeOverview.aspx>

Outer Banks 130: <http://www.obx130.com>

Duckworks: <http://www.duckworksmagazine.com/>

Core Sound 17: <http://www.bandbyachtdesigns.com/cs17.htm>

Puddle Duck Racer: <http://www.pdracer.com/>

[http://waderweb.com/events/090608\\_tx200/index.htm](http://waderweb.com/events/090608_tx200/index.htm)

<http://www.texas200.com/2008/stories/linn/index.htm>

<http://www.texas200.com/2008/stories/nabors/index.htm>

Texas 200 Route: <http://texas200.com/route.htm>

2009 Stories & Photos: <http://texas200.com/2009/index.htm>

[http://waderweb.com/events/090608\\_tx200/day4/day4\\_9.htm](http://waderweb.com/events/090608_tx200/day4/day4_9.htm)

I went into the T-200 with over 25,000 sea miles that I can dig out of personal log-books, aboard various boats with mechanical sumlogs, and later GPS trip meters. I suppose there were as many small boat miles accumulated before all the fancy equipment came available. Lots and lots of time on the water. And that doesn't count driving ships for Uncle Sam. Lots of boats, lots of study, lots of experience.

When people hereabouts asked me what in the hell I was doing going off to south Texas in summer, I had a ready reply. I've joined just about every boat club that has come along. I've even run a few of them. I already sail my own boats most every day of the year. But what I sensed with the T-200 was, "This is where all the cool kids are going this year."

I was right about that. You guys are certainly the top of the heap. Lots of really innovative boats, lots of really first class seamanship. And lots of really nice people. Carl took the time and effort to "find" me through Bob Hicks, the editor of *Messing About in Boats*. Dave Ware, of Merlin, is a gentleman of the old stamp. And it was a pleasure working with Jason back on launch day when we still thought we had a shot at making Gary Cull's cute-as-a-button mini tug, *Snail Mail*, watertight. And where would we be if Gary hadn't hauled the lot of us back and forth to dinner on Day 2?

With all my sea miles and all my boats I made one fundamental error in planning, and one monumental misapprehension in judging the basic ethos of this event. I think both of these revelations would be useful for anyone thinking about making the considerable investment in time, effort, and money this event requires. First, my screw-up. I did read all the accounts and looked at all the videos and stills from Year 1. I did look at Google Earth for a sense of the route. And I did obtain NOAA charts of the area (worse than useless). I didn't know about the fishing maps and I didn't have the proper electronic mapping software for the area.

Basically I didn't do what I have done scads of times before a voyage. I didn't sit down with the best available guidebooks and charts and narrative descriptions and simply memorize the essential elements. This made changing the play while the ball was in motion a lot less likely. I never head offshore, even for an afternoon sail, without at least plotting an hourly posit on the paper chart. Even with GPS and radar, etc.

## Dan Rogers' Story



But, from everything I read (and obviously read into) from last year's vets, I simply ASSUMED that there would be, if not organized nav briefs, then spontaneous gatherings to discuss the vicissitudes of the next day's route. So I spent my time preparing boat and rig and trailer and truck. I'd get the nav "part" figured out when I got there. Bad plan. For what it is worth, I took *Lady Bug* out every opportunity throughout the winter here when I could approximate wind and wave conditions in the thin water of SOTEX. Sun and heat/humidity had to be "simulated."

As a result, I showed up with spares for just about everything, enough water to supply an army on the march, bug screens and repellent, and on and on. I even had an extra outboard to loan out. *Lady Bug* was an easy 500lbs pounds overweight and she's already 1,500lbs dry on a 14' water line. When I had to shorten sail to keep rudder control, she

was frankly a little piglet. A slowpoke that needed 3' of water. Here is where my misunderstanding of the group think completely ruined it for me. Nobody's fault. Other than mine, that is.

I towed a heavy trailer 1,640 miles across the desert to join a group cruise. And what I witnessed was more of a cavalry charge. While I was able to offer parts, and expertise and moral support to a number of the participants during the initial days, I didn't have the misfortune of personally breaking anything or even shipping more water than a little spray. But I quickly became what I refer to as "the slow, fat kid at the back of the scout troop." Everybody streaked on by. I approached a couple of boats to be buddy boats, but the first time I stopped to reef they simply rolled on over the horizon, no radio follow-up, nothin'. I get self sufficiency. I get unreasonable legal liabilities.

But when I was sitting for my 100-ton ticket the "correct answer" was, "It is your responsibility as master of a vessel to aid another vessel in distress unless you would place your own vessel or crew in jeopardy." That has been the law of the sea for as long as men have served in ships. From what I saw and heard, the PDRs and Carl honored that tradition. But this general notion that it HAS to be every man for himself had me flummoxed.

As I said, Dave Ware is a gentleman and quite a fine seaman in the bargain. He, for all practical purposes, escorted me through what appeared from upwind to be at best a reef and at worst a rapidly shelving foreshore fully enveloped in breakers. As I have done for literally hundreds of other sailors over the years, he simply slowed down and allowed me to follow his track. As a resident of Rockport, he was a marvelous fund of local knowledge and more than gracious when he first showed me where the only real anchorage could be found. Then he introduced me to his wife and some local friends who helped me get back to Magnolia Beach, when I decided to call it a day.

I dropped out because it wasn't prudent to attempt to find the Night 3 anchorage in the dark and I didn't have any reasonable expectation that my speed of advance would avail a daylight arrival. But moreover, I didn't come all that way to sail by myself. I came to join "the cool kids" in a shared adventure. It's humbling to be the slow kid nobody wants to walk with. That this is an obvious upshot goes without saying. That it MUST be goes without excuse.



## Berkshire Boat Building School

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[www.berkshireboatbuildingschool.org](http://www.berkshireboatbuildingschool.org)

### Classes

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April 23, 25: Learn to build a skin-on-frame Kayak

For details visit [www.yestermorrow.org](http://www.yestermorrow.org)

### For Sale

At [www.berkshireboatbuildingschool.org](http://www.berkshireboatbuildingschool.org)

Plans (two sheets that can be use for several canoes – both solo and tandem

– for a 10½' boat up to a 11½' boat – \$45 including mailing

Kayak plans (three sheets) that can be used for boats ranging

from 11½' to 15½' – \$60

Partial kit – includes 2 brass stem bands, 30 northern white cedar ribs, 4oz of imitation sinew – \$125 + mailing \$40 = \$165

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and material – \$35 and up

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# Mike Monies' Story

Two and a half days into the Texas 200, Corpus Christi Bay was showing its rough side. Chop was turned into whitecaps and my Bolger Cartopper was on the edge of disaster, as it had been so often in the high winds and waves, even with a reef tied in. When the *Noble Plan* went over we were upside down and dismasted in the middle of Corpus Christi Bay. I had left the Intercoastal Canal and hugged the leeward side of Mustang Island as much as possible, cutting through Shamrock Cove, but now I had been running almost due downwind to Stingray Hole and the wind and waves had been building.

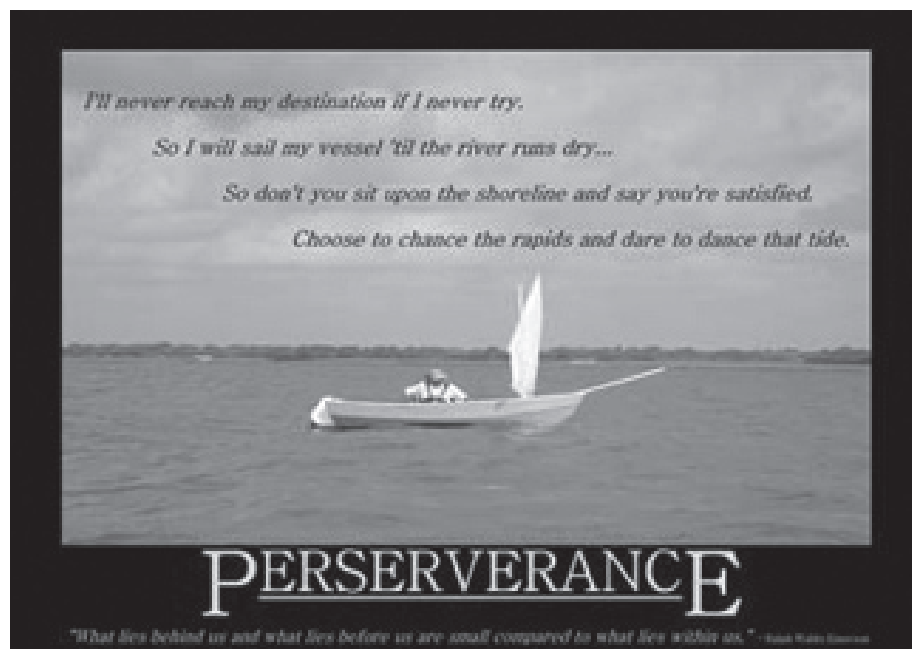
The Bolger Cartopper has no seating so I had been on my knees for over two hours, trying to shift my weight with the sheet in my left hand, the long tiller in my right hand behind my back. By pumping the sheet, pulling it in when the boat rolled to windward and letting it out when it rolled to leeward, I had so far managed to stay somewhat upright. The Cartopper with its narrow 4' beam and large sail area, even when reefed, was overwhelmed by the conditions.

In the end, however, it was not the boat that let me down. My 63-year-old body chose just the wrong time to get a very bad charlie horse in my left leg. I simply had to straighten it out and when I shifted my weight, over I went. Back at the Padre Island Yacht Club I had tied everything into the boat, but now things started to drift away. I let them go and stuck with the boat. The charlie horse was still in my leg and wouldn't go away, but wearing flotation gear I was in no danger. I managed to get the Cartopper upright one time, but the high winds and waves simply turned it over the other way. The mast had come loose from the boat despite being tied down, too.

I was drifting toward Stingray Hole and the boat was floating well, thanks to the watertight area I had built into the floor, not part of the original plans. At this point Carl Haddick came up in his beautiful green Compac catboat to offer help. He had Kevin Hahn, the videographer, with him and Kevin got in the water with me. After considerable effort we got the boat upright, bailed out, and me back in it. They towed me back to shore right at Stingray Hole. I was tired and wet but most of all despondent. I had lost my mast and sail, as well as an oar and sleeping tent, but losing a mast and sail does ruin your day. I did not want to drop out.

Dragging my boat around the point, I found the Bolger Folding schooner, resting and enjoying lunch, along with Kevin O'Neill and Laurent in the lime green proa, along with the entire flock of Puddleduckers. Carl had called the towboat on his radio, as well as the Coast Guard. At this point the towboat showed up and I waved out to tell him I was all right and did not want a tow. He went off looking for the lost mast and sails, but returned later with neither, having found two pieces of my take-apart oars.

By the time I walked back to the Cartopper the Ducks had come up with a plan to fit a spare sail one of them had to a spare mast another had. The Ducks already had out a big toolbox and were using an axe to shape the end of their square mast to fit in my round mast step. While I ate sausage and oranges offered by Kevin and Laurent, the Ducks



rigged the polytarp sail with a sheet hoist and downhaul, all done with electrical wire ties. In no time at all, about ten minutes, I had a sort of square sail that could be raised and lowered as well as controlled with a sheet.

The plan was for me to sail to Port Aransas and call for help. They urged me to go ahead and they would follow. I set off into the ship channel and was amazed at how well the new sail worked. With almost equal area on both sides of the mast, the Cartopper was much more stable and my speed downwind was quite good. I determined I could sail on a beam reach but could not make progress to windward. The rest of the trip would be downwind, so I decided to keep going past Port Aransas. I turned into the Lidia Ann channel and made it to Paul's Mott Reef by 6pm. The backpacker's hammock tent was lost overboard, but one of my reasons for building the Cartopper was it had room to sleep onboard. I stretched out in my still wet clothes on the floorboards and slept in the boat. Since everything was wet there didn't seem to be much choice.

The only real trouble I had for the last two days of the trip was getting in to Army Hole. The entrance was directly upwind. I tried for over an hour and a half to get up the channel but the temporary sail just could not do it. Since I only had one oar left, I could not row into the wind. I was about to tie up to a channel marker and sleep on the boat when Carl and Chuck came out to tow me in. Once again, saved.

When building the Cartopper, I built it as an Expedition Model, with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " frames instead of the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " frames called for. I glassed it inside as well as outside and added an airtight chamber under the flat sleeping floor. The only real change I made to the plan was to make the large rudder into a 1" thick foil instead of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick as called for in the plans. The rudder was finished with carbon and worked quite well. The extra long tiller is a custom wood tiller I made for an AMF Pace-ship 23 I am restoring. The extra length and strength were a plus in the long sailing periods. The two lower sections of the mast I lost came from my B & B *Two Pav*.

The only real problem with the boat was the lack of a place to sit. That was a real prob-

lem as it led to leg cramps. The leg cramps were what caused me to capsize and dismast. I got to envying even the Ducks, who could sit on the windward side aft, just like in a chair. The Cartopper, a tender handling boat, carries a large amount of sail for her size. She is fast, even fully reefed, but probably not the right boat for an inexperienced sailor on a long trip like the Texas 200. I viewed her as a challenge and deliberately chose her design for this trip, mainly for the camping ability of her cockpit decking which allowed my tent to be set up on her.

Going into the Texas 200 was a challenge I set myself, first to complete a boat for the event in time, and second to complete the sail itself. My greatest satisfaction was to actually finish, with the help of so many others. It made me feel a sense of achievement to realize what I was actually capable of accomplishing. Definitely I will be returning next year, but not singlehanded or in a boat this small. The *Noble Plan* was the smallest boat I have ever built or sailed.

Those entering the Texas 200 for next year need to pay special attention to their boat's handling in high winds and choppy seas as well as its mechanical and physical sturdiness. Just reading this and last year's accounts points this out. Lots of dismasting, equipment failure, and breakage. Another point to consider is the sailing ability of those entering this event. Both years the weather has been pretty much what you expect off the Texas coast, hot and windy. The winds this year were higher than last but this was no storm or unusual weather, just sailing along the Texas coast.

The coast is dotted with hazards, some that move, like the ships and barges, and some that lie beneath the water, like the oyster reefs, mud flats, or even rusted oil field debris. I personally never turned on my GPS the entire trip, sailing as I always have by visual and compass points. Too much reliance on electronics can lead to accidents in these areas, as happened on this year's sail. Having said all this, and still being very bruised and scratched as well as with a bad sunburn on one leg, I wouldn't have missed any of this. The Texas 200 is a life adventure for some of us. Others may have just had a good sail.

"Lodged your passage plan yet?" my friend asked with a grin. It was a little friendly banter rather than a real question because he knew what my answer would be. You don't really organize, let alone lodge a plan, in a 15' boat, do you? Rather, you take it day by day and go where wind and tide allow. My friend has a yacht about twice *The Genie's* length with a huge Diesel capable of thump-thumping it along in any direction should the wind prove too light for sailing. By contrast, my Sunspot is really only a dinghy-with-attitude complete with a 2hp for those windless days.

But naturally there was a plan of sorts. Northerlies were forecast for the whole week and it had been a couple of years since we'd got as far south as the Medway, so where better to have as a hoped-for destination? Apart from this, my aim was to put as many miles under the keel as I could in the few days I had. *The Genie* seemed to need a romp in the same way children need to run and jump for sheer joy when let out from the confines of a classroom.

So when I let go that Sunday morning we headed south to round Walton Pier only seven miles away, but it took a staggering long time. The forecast had been for F3-4 but in the event it struggled to make an F2. A quick change of passage plan was called for. So we sailed west along the Wallet to pass Clacton rather than to the southwest. Hopefully we'd make the Colne to anchor overnight and would have stronger winds by morning. For the most part, I sat on the lee side, heeling the boat, endeavoring to induce some sort of shape into the sails, but the sea was restless and shook them like a dog that's just caught a rat. We needed a little more wind.

Half an hour of tuneless whistling brought one brief spurt just before Clacton Pier. Suddenly we were making 4kts but it dropped almost before I recorded it in my log and *The Genie* continued her curmudgeonly progress with slatting sails. Eventually I anchored her for that night in the Colne. So much for planning, I thought, but despite the light winds we'd covered 18 miles in eight hours.

Next morning, Monday, the breeze seemed to have a little more force in it and we stood out to the southeast, taking the ebb to the Spitway, a gap between the Gunfleet and the Buxey sands which stood between us and the Thames. But approaching low water the wind dropped again, leaving us wallowing and unlikely to make it through before the flood arrived to carry us back. Like the legendary narrow boat skipper, I cried to heaven, "We need more steam!" In the story the engineer on the bank reputedly replied, "Sure the horse is doing its best!" Clearly my two horses were needed and we motored the short remaining distance, went through and caught the flood down the next channel, the Whitaker, again wallowing for a while.

Eventually the sea breeze filled in from the southeast and although for a while it rose enough to suggest it might push us round the next obstacle, the Whitaker Spit, I didn't trust it and when it dropped again we continued our half-drift, half-sail into the Crouch, eventually arriving and anchoring for the night in the Roach, having covered yet another 18 miles in another eight hours.

Tuesday saw a somewhat stronger blow from the north but again I felt unsure of it. We could have caught the ebb out, rounded the Whitaker Spit, and headed south along the Maplins towards Kent, but instead those doubts persisted and were reinforced by the fact that the lifting bridge at Havengore

## With Great Britain's Dinghy Cruisers

### The Plan

By Ted Jones

Reprinted from the *Dinghy Cruising Association Bulletin* #200

(Ted recounts an enjoyable cruise for which a plan would have been irrelevant or even impossible to prepare)

Creek was out of action. It meant the shortcut, knocking over 15 miles off the trip, through which we might have passed either going or coming back was unusable. Our only route remained the longer one and in uncertain winds...? All of which made me choose to sail up the Crouch instead.

This proved interesting just the same. The big plastic-fantastics were in Burnham, but the smaller and more interesting boats were further upriver. We worked our way up as far as Hullbridge where the light breeze became fragmented by the surrounding trees and the tide had not risen enough for us to go further. So here we turned and retraced our steps, again with the wind eventually becoming southeast as the sea breeze took over after a dead period. We continued down the Crouch, passing several possible overnight anchorages. I had half-formed a plan to go out and through the Rays'n Channel and into the Blackwater. But not tonight. It would be half ebb by the time we arrived, meaning there was only slightly less than a slim possibility of getting through!

I continued sailing. The SE breeze held steady and it grew dark. I eventually picked out the winking Crouch Buoy, the place where I needed to turn north into what remained of the gap between Buxey Sands and the Dengie mud. I headed *The Genie* into the shallows and anchored. She took the ground quietly half an hour later at 2300h. The shore hereabouts is very low lying and it seemed surreal to be anchored with nothing in sight except the remote house light and the winking buoys. We'd covered 35 miles in 13 hours.

I took a last look round after a Pot Noodle evening meal and saw something moving on the mud. Reaching for the glasses I found it was a pair of giant herring gulls. Presumably they'd come out here for the worms but it may have been for something else. They saw me and froze until I ducked below again. If it wasn't worms, I hoped I hadn't interrupted one of those romantic moments.

I turned in at 2330h and slept soundly until the returning flood joggled me awake at 0430h on Wednesday morning. The plan for that day was to get through into the deeper water beyond, only a mile or so, then anchor once more for a breakfast and a further sleep before continuing. However, when I set sail at 0500h to head north, I found the best breeze I'd encountered all week, and from the northwest as well. This meant I could close-haul my way through the Rays'n and then tack into the west and continue up the Blackwater. Always provided the breeze held, of course.

And it did! *The Genie* loved the F3-4 and hustled her way along. One or two dash-

es of spray landed on my unwashed face and helped to keep me awake. I don't think passage plans can accommodate sudden changes of fortune like that, can they?

Once right through to the north, I have to for a quickie breakfast after which *The Genie* continued west up the Blackwater until, around Osea Island, the breeze began to falter. And about this time I realized I was tired so, seizing the moment, I nudged *The Genie* into the shallows off the island and anchored, treating myself to a wash, a proper meal, and a snooze.

When I awoke the sea breeze had once again filled in. The tide would soon be sufficient to take me on up to Maldon. However, the forecast for tomorrow was now up to a F5 and I wondered if I should spend time going further up or instead head back where I would be better placed to jump off on that trip down the Wallet towards base. I had to pick up my wife from the airport in a couple of days and didn't fancy too rough a passage. An F6, which it could well become at times if coupled with an onshore breeze, would need two reefs and give us quite a battle.

There was no hint in the forecast of what lay in store for the following day. It could be better or it could be worse. Clearly the weather was changing so I became determined to go back while I still could, just in case it did worsen. Accordingly, I returned and anchored *The Genie* that evening in the Colne again at the eastern end of Mersea Island, having covered some 28 miles in 11 sailing hours.

Early next morning, whilst the tide was still making, *The Genie* was underway. It looked a delightful day with a comfortable northwesterly breeze and we ran south, goose-winged, to enter the Wallet in half an hour and catch the east-going ebb. The lightish wind continued as we reached along but I noticed it gradually veered and the sheets came in little by little until, after Clacton, a couple of gusts hit us and I knew we'd soon need that first reef. A few swipes later I pulled it down and as the land fell away to the north we came close on the wind. Very few tacks were needed at first, but by Walton Pier the wind had veered into the NNE, firmly in my teeth in other words, and the seas around the Naze became very nasty. Great holes appeared set at intervals like tank-traps and *The Genie* dutifully fell into them, each time with a resounding shudder.

By now we should really have had the second reef in to accommodate those stronger gusts, but since each seemed relatively short lived I simply eased the mainsheet as they hit and struggled on. It was a daft decision in retrospect. In those sea conditions that second reef would have been the very devil to put in if the strength of the gusts had remained constant. However, we got away with it but it was a wet trip.

A Spritsail barge came south as we left the Naze, running before the breeze, minus her topsail, always a sign of strongish winds. And just astern of her a Harwich-bound yacht proved just how strong it was. She went over at an extreme angle in one of the very localized gusts and one of her bilge keels became clearly visible out of the water. Yachts are made to survive in these conditions, but not to sail like that. I looked at my own wake and realized how much leeway we made when heeled. Not good.

Gradually, as we gained more sea room the holes became fewer and better spaced and each board took us further north towards



Harwich. We lost the ebb after a while but that didn't seem to impede our progress too much and eventually we were inside Land-guard Point where we picked up the flood which took us through the harbour.

I had expected a fair wind along the Stour but after the usual Heinz winds (57 varieties) through Harwich itself and then under the high ground of Shotley, I found instead that it had gone back into the NW leaving me close on the wind after all. Again there had been a plan in mind, to get as far upriver as I could, but tiredness cut in and once round the corner into the protective shallows of Holebrook Bay, I decided enough was enough and let go for the night. We had come 26 miles in the nine hours.

One thing I learned. One of my bags of gear had been foolishly left on the side bench and under it was some of that rubberized matting supposed to prevent things from sliding about. Nevertheless, I had expected it to be dumped onto the cabin sole but amazingly the bag had stayed put throughout all the rough and tumble around the Naze. The matting works, is the message.

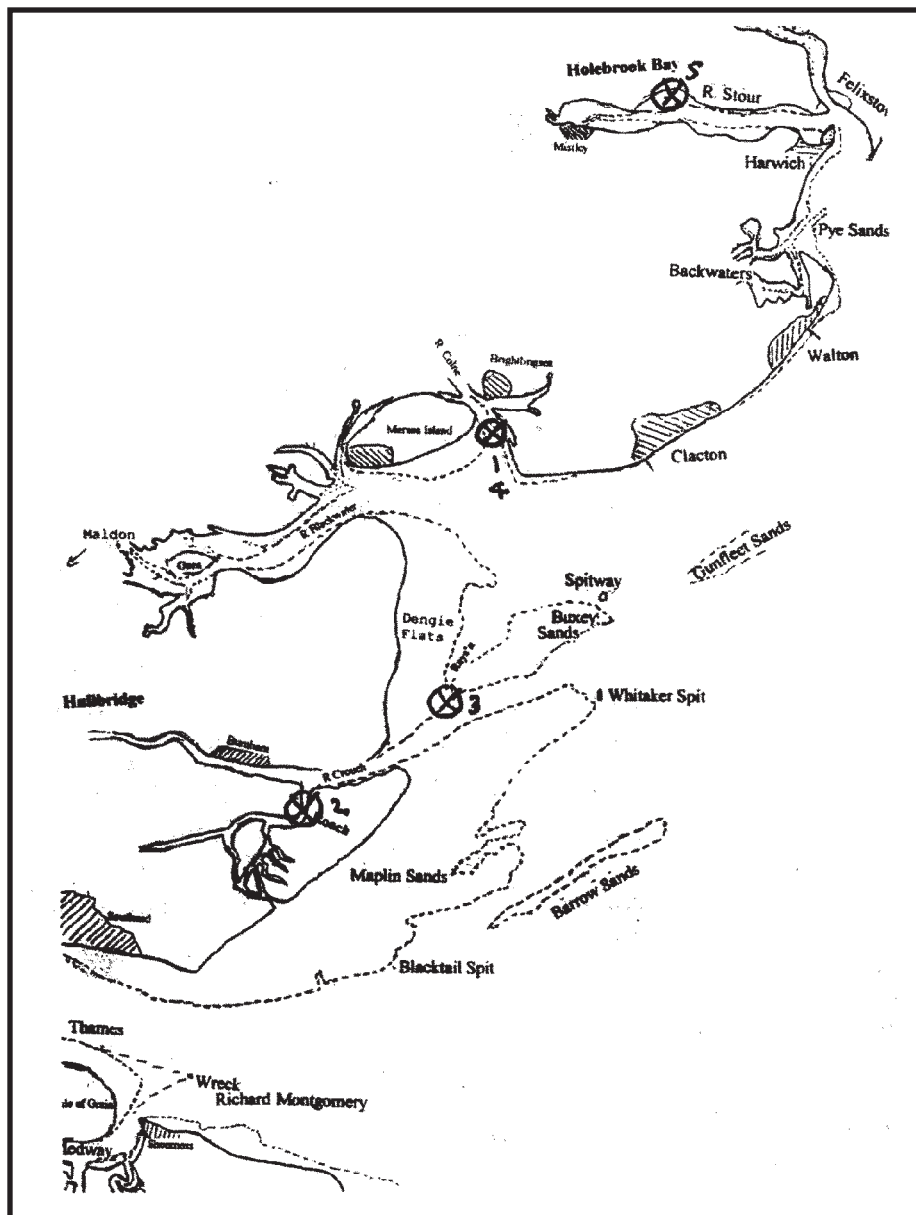
I didn't hear a forecast until waking on Friday morning and learned that the breeze would be W-NW and about F3. Perverse isn't it how one can struggle through as I had only to find that if I had chickened out, I'd have been better off? Friday's wind, together with the later tides, would have made it an easy passage. But some eggs never hatch, do they, no matter how long you sit and ponder? And the sail had been challenging, exciting, and successful. What more could I ask?

I hauled in the anchor and took a grand tour of the Stour, nosing into all the shallows and even finding a couple of possible meeting points for future DCA rallies which I hadn't previously known about. And when the ebb started to run I ran with it, out through Harwich and down towards the Walton Backwaters. That fair wind gave me a faster trip than expected, even over the foul tide waiting for us outside, and we arrived in the marina earlier than planned. I didn't waste the time gained though. One look around *The Genie* and all the mud accumulated over the week was enough to make me reach for the scrubbing brush. She looked quite spry by the time I left her ready for next time, which hopefully won't be long. Maybe then I'll be able to make a passage plan and stick to it!

Overall, there had been a couple of tedious days when the sails slatted more than they pulled, or so it seemed, and I would have wished for better, but there had been a rough and exciting day to act as a balance. And there'd been some new things. I'd also achieved the second part of my plan in the six days by sailing for over 54 hours and covering almost 150 miles with probably less than an hour's motoring. Hardly record breaking but... It was great to be back with my little Sunspot again after a leave of absence whilst I tried out a larger boat, *Magic*.

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Sunset at Key West.

After seven weeks in the Bahamas, *Jitterbug* was safely docked at Ft Lauderdale City Marina. We took a much needed two-day rest, restocking provisions and acclimating to the hustle and bustle of Florida life during the tourist season. One major purchase was a Dahon "Curve" three-speed, 16" wheel folding bicycle. This is the only bike I could find that folds small enough to (barely) fit inside *Jitterbug's* aft sleeping bunk. It cost more than my first automobile but proved to be money well spent, greatly enhancing my experience at every port. I would consider it a must have for future trips.



Dahon Curve.

The plan (as it were) was to sail south to Key West, then across Florida Bay to Flamingo (which is the southern end of Everglades National Park), travel through the Everglades to the Marco Island/Naples area, and up the west coast to Ft Myers where we would pick up the Okeechobee Waterway which connects the east and west coasts of Florida. At that point I would make a decision whether continue sailing north to our homeport in New Jersey or fly home and return with a trailer for *Jitterbug*. This is a very nice option available to Potter owners.

We left Ft Lauderdale on February 24 and leisurely motor-sailed 18 miles down the ICW to anchor in a well-protected cove at Oleta State Park, which is near Haulover Inlet. Since there is a public beach just across the channel, we stayed an extra day to take in the sights. From there we continued south to Miami Marina to spend an afternoon in the big city. Dockage was \$14 for three hours,

## *Jitterbug* A West Wight Potter 19 Visits the Bahamas

By John Depa

### (Part III of a Six-Month Cruise)

but well worth the expense. The marina waterfront is a huge complex of stores and restaurants and is within walking distance of Center City and Miami College Campus. I took advantage of the free monorail system to see the entire city before walking through the downtown shopping district. I returned to the marina in time to continue south to an anchorage off Key Biscayne at Hurricane Hole (along with 20 other cruisers). GPS odometer recorded 20 miles for the day.



Welcome to Miami.

At this point the bay opens up enough to permit better sailing and the following day we covered 26 miles to Elliot Key at Biscayne National Park. There is camping and overnight dockage available for a modest fee, but it was a Friday with lots of small power boats arriving and I had a feeling that this might be a "party time" location, so I left there to anchor out of earshot range. On the morning of February 28 we caught a favorable breeze to sail 29 miles to Key Largo, where we again anchored tight to the beach. I did not go ashore, instead hoisting anchor early to begin travel. We sailed 17 miles to Plantation Key when the wind really picked up, so I motored into a sheltered creek and tied the bow to a mangrove tree and dropped a stern anchor.

That night several powerboats arrived, and with lights on the water they began to dip net shrimp, by the hundreds, as the shrimp drifted by in the tidal current. They stayed until after midnight when the tide slackened. Next morning the wind was still howling so I was content to spend another day in the protective mangroves. A few mangrove snapper that I caught provided diversion and a fresh fish dinner, one of many such meals to be enjoyed on this trip.



Fresh fish dinner.

Next morning, March 3, the winds abated and we got underway early to sail a credible 47 miles to Marathon Key. We passed under the bridge to the ocean side and dropped anchor just at dusk near Molasses Key. From this point south to Key West, passage is on the Atlantic side down Hawk Channel, which is only partially protected by a submerged reef. One hopes the winds are not easterly. There are a few places where a small craft like the Potter could sneak into for shelter, but I took advantage of a very favorable breeze the next day and sailed the remaining 52 miles to round Key West point and anchor on the leeward side, near Wisteria Island amid dozens of other sailing cruisers.

Next morning I called several of the marinas located in Key West Bight, which is the heart of the city. I am told that during normal seasons it is impossible to get a boat slip without "knowing someone," but due to the economic slump limited dockage was available at every marina I inquired. Prices for *Jitterbug* ranged from \$88 to \$122 per night, \$\$\$\$WOW. We rented the \$88 slip for three nights at Key West Marina, which is located right at the waterfront complex. In fact, when I exited the



boat I was only four to five steps away from the main sidewalk. Seeing *Jitterbug's* New Jersey boat registration, a few captains of larger boats smugly inquired, "You didn't sail all the way here in 'That, did you?'" So, in defense of the Potter I would just as smugly reply, "No, not directly, we stopped off in the Bahamas for a few months before coming here."



Key West Marina.

Key West has a tradition of being an open town, very liberal in their outlook on life. They have a "no questions asked" policy and most people were simply known by their first name followed by "from up north." Many residents became rich as smugglers during the prohibition era. And, of course, the Duval Street bar scene was made famous by colorful characters like Ernest "Papa" Hemingway. That being said, street crime is at a minimum.

First thing I did after docking was to unfold the bike and take advantage of the numerous riding trails. One trail goes completely around the city, following the ocean coast for a few miles with noted landmarks along the way. It is five to seven miles, depending on exact street choices. I pedaled this several times, making stops at various beach locations and garden centers. At 7pm a crowd starts to gather at Mallory Square for the "sunset festivities." Many artists/musicians make their living by performing in the square for tips. It's quite a spectacle!



Performer in Mallory Square.

The night scene begins just after dark and continues until...? There is no problem finding a theme bar of your choosing, from drag queens to bull riding and everything in between. And they all boast of serving "The Biggest Margarita in Key West" and have colorful names like "The Bull," "Big Uns," "Dirty Harry's," and Hemingway's haunt, "Sloppy Joe's Bar."

An optional attraction at Key West is to do a 70-mile cruise to Fort Jefferson on the Dry Tortugas. It is a mammoth structure of red brick built at great expense both monetarily and in human sacrifice. I thought about sailing *Jitterbug* down there but decided against it and instead booked passage on the *Yankee Freedom*, a 100' catamaran that made the trip in two hours. The cost was \$165 which included a buffet breakfast, lunch, snacks, admission fees, guided tour, and snorkel gear. The tour guides were excellent, food plentiful, and the boat well maintained.

About 25 miles out of Key West we passed a group of islands known as the Marquesas, which were described as the only atoll in the Atlantic Ocean. Since there are no volcanoes in the Atlantic, it is speculated that the lagoon was created by a large meteor striking the island. One of our tour guides had run barefoot charters down there for a number of years and she suggested that it would be a great experience for *Jitterbug*. She also hinted that fishing was excellent in that area. Mention "excellent fishing" to me and I am there! Thus Plan D (or was it Plan E?) was born.



Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas.

Back at Key West, I spent the next day visiting local attractions and provisioning for the side trip. One of the items purchased was a heavier fishing rod, one capable of handling small shark and king mackerel. On March 8 we set sail for the Marquesas in a near perfect breeze that allowed trolling much of the time. We caught three blues, a yellow snapper, and had three other fish break off. Dolphin played at the bow for some time and we spotted two large (green?) turtles basking in the sun. A very pleasant 26-mile run.

The NE side of the island is surrounded by shallows so I raised the keel to drift-cast the flats in 18" of water. As I neared the island a few VERY LARGE fish spooked in a cloud of mud. They became more numerous and appeared to be nurse sharks, mostly in the 6-10' range. I was later told that they may have been lemon sharks? This was probably a spawning area. I eventually made it through the flats to anchor in the central lagoon. A memorable day, indeed.

Marquesas sand flats.



Next morning I followed a small fishing boat through the lagoon to exit on the western side of the atoll. It is much deeper on that side and several sailboats were anchored just offshore. I motor trolled in the direction of a submerged reef, catching two Spanish mackerel (one for dinner), a few snapper, and a large king mackerel. Upon returning to the atoll the white sandy beach was irresistible so I landed *Jitterbug* and took a long walk around half the island. This is a beachcomber's paradise; beautiful shells, lobster pots, net floats, man-o-war jellyfish, driftwood, and other assorted flotsam. But the find of the day was a shipwrecked Cuban escape boat.

There was a similar boat on the Dry Tortugas that was explained in detail. Our US immigration law has a "wet foot-dry foot" policy towards Cubans. If they are intercepted at sea, they are returned to Cuba. However, once they set foot on American soil they are considered US citizens. Since the Marquesas are part of the US, are close to Cuba, and are not heavily patrolled by the Coast Guard, they are a natural destination for refugees. These makeshift boats are secretly hand-crafted from large copper sheets (which must be available in Cuba?) meticulously welded together and fitted with small inboard engines. No frills, this is a one-trip boat. A 21' craft like the one I located would probably hold 20-25 refugees. I assume this group made it because the boat surely would have sunk offshore. *Jitterbug* anchored just off the beach for the night.



Cuban refugee boat.

Next morning I fished from the boat with small pieces of cut bait and caught eight small (spot like) fish perhaps 6" long. I kept them alive in a mesh bag to use for bait out on the ocean reef. Once over the reef I baited the hook 4' below a float and began a slow drift. It didn't take long to get the first strike, which was a decent size (5-6') spinner shark. The fish made high, spectacular leaps, spinning in the air before crashing back into the sea. After three such leaps it changed strategy and dove straight for the bottom where the line was cut by the sharp coral reef. But what a thrill!!

This same scenario was repeated two more times, after which I was so tired that I released the rest of the baitfish and returned to shore for another walk on the desolate beach. It was low tide and the entrance to the lagoon was very shallow, allowing me to see fish actively feeding in the rips. So I walked back to the boat (perhaps a half mile) for a spinning rod and several small lures. After a few casts I hooked a nice 3' barracuda, which was released after a long battle, then subsequently hooked a second one that broke the line. That was enough fishing for one day, so I returned to *Jitterbug* and spent the night double anchored just 10' from shore.





Desolate beach.

On the morning of March 12 the weather forecast predicted a strong cold front approaching the area, one that would linger for three to four days. So I was faced with the decision of hiding out in the atoll lagoon for the duration or making it back to Key West before the front arrived. I decided to beat it back to Key West, and it turned out to be a real “beat” against gusty winds for the last ten miles; it took nine hours to make the 33-mile trip. This time I sailed further around the key to Garrison Bight Marina, which is closer to our next destination and dockage is less than half the cost. This side of the key is near the fleet of charter fishing boats, larger shopping malls, and still only a ten-minute bike ride to the Duval Street action. One nice feature is the new concrete floating docks which make it much easier to enter/exit a small boat. I remained here waiting for the cold front to pass.



Garrison Bight Marina, Key West.

By late afternoon on March 15 the winds had settled enough to begin the long crossing of Florida Bay, a distance of some 70 miles via a dogleg route. We didn’t set sail until 1:30pm but were able to make good time, under full sail, for 27 miles to Sawyer Key where we spent the night. Next day was a sailor’s dream come true, 10-15mph winds off the starboard side enabling a broad reach for the entire 43-mile crossing to Middle Cape in Everglades National Park (ENP). *Jitterbug* actually hit 8mph (very briefly) on the GPS a few times and we had dolphins for company most of the way. Once in the lee of Middle Cape, I landed for a leisurely stroll up this beautiful beach before anchoring for the night. Mine were the only footprints below the high tide line.

I had paddled and sailed the ENP numerous times, on occasion with guys from [www.southernpaddler.com](http://www.southernpaddler.com) so I am familiar with the terrain. It is a wilderness area that spans 100 miles between civilization points, at the west end is Everglades City and the eastern end Flamingo. There are two prima-

ry routes, the outer Gulf route and the interior Wilderness Trail route which is a maze of mangrove islands, small bays, and twisting waterways. But, of course, you can zig-zag back and forth.

Campers must obtain a permit at one of the ranger stations and are assigned a campsite for each night in the park. Camping on the Gulf side is on the various beaches/capes, which extend for miles and miles, while interior camping is on a wooden platform called a chickee. Each campsite, or chickee, has an outhouse toilet. These are maintained by the “honey boat” which makes scheduled pump-out stops. Camping is limited to 15 days so if you intend to paddle both ways (about 250 miles round trip) you must do so in the allotted time. I did it once in a 14’ canoe but felt too rushed to fully enjoy the experience. I was looking forward to spending leisure time here with the Potter.



Typical camping chickee.

After such a great sail the previous day, I decided to press my luck and sail to Flamingo (in the opposite direction of my intended route) for a pleasure cruise. I had not been there in years and wanted to witness the devastation caused by the latest hurricane, the small convenience store had just recently opened for business after being rebuilt. Under gentle breezes we made the 17 miles in five hours, arriving just in time for lunch, followed by a half-hour “Nature Talk” given by one of the park rangers. The motel and restaurant complex was razed and is not scheduled to be rebuilt. We left there in late afternoon and only sailed back 13 miles to anchor off East Cape, just shy of where we spent the previous night. So it was a 30-mile “sail to nowhere” that ended in a net loss of four miles for the day. My kind of travel schedule!

March 18 was another day of beach combing, this time on NW Cape. Early on I mentioned purchasing an inflatable kayak. It is an Airis-10 made by Walker Bay that incorporates a new carbon fiber technology allowing it to be inflated to a high PSI, which makes it very rigid. It had been stored in the starboard sleeping berth for the past four months. The Potter is so versatile that I never had occasion to use the kayak, but I did use it here to gain access to some of the shallow beaches and to explore/fish deep into the tangled maze of mangroves. I must say that it performed very well, its stability an asset to exit/enter the boat, and it was easily inflated/deflated aboard *Jitterbug*. An open water test paddle/fishing trip produced several nice sea trout, one of which made it to the frying pan for dinner. Later that evening schools of tarpon moved into the area, putting on a spectacular aerial show at dusk, and then again at dawn.



Airis-10 inflatable kayak.

After five days of light winds and sunshine the weather radio forecasted yet another approaching cold front, so we moved 12 miles further west, into the protected Shark River area. The river mouth at Ponce de Leon Bay provides a deep anchorage for larger sailboats crossing over from Key West, but *Jitterbug* was able to move further upriver. We spent a total of five days in this area, moving up to Tarpon Bay for one night and back out to Ponce de Leon Bay when the wind calmed.

One morning the fishhook style anchor I was using off the stern got snagged in some mangrove roots and the only recourse was a dive to the bottom. I finally freed it on the third attempt, followed by a quick rinse with fresh water. The tarpon increased their spawning activity, rolling and leaping. I spent one entire day paddling the kayak deep (five to seven miles) up an ever-narrowing creek to the point where it was not much wider than the kayak. Spawning(?) tarpon (perhaps 50lbs) were in such shallow water that they rocked the kayak in passing. This was also a great opportunity to catch mangrove snapper on light spinning tackle. Days spent like this are long remembered.



Deep in the mangroves.

The wind died down so we moved back out to open waters where I attempted to hook a tarpon using the live baitfish method. Unfortunately, the local sharks were hungrier than the tarpon and it took a 15-minute battle to get a black tip shark close enough to the boat to cut the leader for a release. Another live bait had the same result, but this shark managed to wrap around the keel for some time before I was able to free it, once again cutting the leader for a release. Almost out of large hooks and leader material, I abandoned that strategy of tarpon fishing.

Black tip shark.





On Monday, March 23, I was running low on fresh water and decided to move on. Since the tide was outgoing, I elected to drift cast a large popping plug in a final effort to catch a tarpon, and this time my efforts were rewarded. I saw the fish stalking the bait, with its fin slicing through the early morning calm water. Then it hit the lure with an explosive strike and made a short run followed by a spectacular leap, it then proceeded to strip line from the large spinning reel. I tightened the drag a bit and the big fish made another acrobatic leap, splashing back into the water and followed with another long run.

By this time the reel was almost spooled (empty of line) when the tarpon made a third jump that resulted in the line breaking. The entire battle lasted less than two minutes, but it was a two-minute peak experience that I will never forget. I would estimate the fish at 50-60lbs, which is not large for a tarpon. My theory (excuse) is that the line was weakened from the long shark battles the previous day. I shall return.

I didn't even bother to re-tie the fishing line, but instead hoisted sail for the 25-mile run to New Turkey Key, which we made in seven hours. Once anchored in the deep, protected cove, I paddled the kayak to the beach for a leg stretch. It had been five days since I set foot on dry land. When I had reached the halfway point of this small key, a solo kayaker beached to set up his camp for the night. We chatted briefly before I returned to *Jitterbug*. He was the only person I came in contact with during the entire Everglades stay.

Next morning we set sail for Brush Island, which lies beyond the Park boundary, just east of Goodland. With a favorable breeze we made the 30-mile run in seven hours, in time to catch a Spanish mackerel for dinner. Once on anchor, I deflated the kayak and stored it for the remainder of the trip.



Sunset on the Gulf.

We got an early start on March 25 to motor up the Marco River, definitely back in civilization here with lots of power boat traffic. We bypassed Marco Island and continued on to Naples City Marina where we rented a slip for two nights at \$45 per night. It had been 12 days since I had a real shower, so I took advantage of the hot water. There are several restaurants and stores located just outside the marina, and the downtown shopping district is within (a long) walking distance and easily reached with a bicycle. Naples appeared to me an upscale community with an art deco flare. I caught up on email at the library, spent two mornings chatting with locals on the free fishing pier, walked

the beach, took long bike rides, and shopped in the Tin City mall complex. This is a complete about-face from the Everglades experience, but a welcome change.



Tin City Mall.

There is no ICW route north of Naples, so an open ocean (Gulf of Mexico) run of 25 miles is required. The weather forecast was "iffy" at 15-20mph but it allowed for a downwind run so we made a go of it with a partially furled Genoa. The run took exactly five hours, rounding into Carlos Pass through a set of breakers before reaching the calm interior waters. The north side of the inlet is Ft Myers Beach and the south side Estero Island, Lover's Key State Park. There were many powerboats anchored to the beach so we raised the keel and joined the crowd. People were very friendly and offered to keep an eye on *Jitterbug* while I took a long walk up the beach to the concession stand. Upon returning, I double anchored for the night and was later joined by a host of fishermen who caught a variety of fish casting from shore. An enjoyable day in pleasant company.



Lovers Key State Park.

Fishermen and beachcombers arrived early next morning (at daybreak) so I was ready for a full day of sailing. However, the outboard motor carburetor kept flooding. I figured the problem to be with the check valve so I drained the bowl and tried tapping the side to free it, no go. So I swung *Jitterbug* around, stern to shore, to remove and disassemble the carburetor. It was a tricky proposition because the powerboat wakes caused quite a rocking motion. Eventually progress was made and sure enough I found a small speck of dirt in the check valve seat. I reassembled everything and off we went. Never had a problem after that. With such a late start we only made 17 miles up San Carlos Pass before anchoring in a small cove just beyond Shell Point. This being a Saturday night, the cove got a bit crowded and noisy.

On March 29 we motor-sailed the remaining 14 miles to reach Ft Myers City Marina where I paid for two nights dockage. It was somewhat disappointing to learn that Center City had experienced a period of decline, but was encouraging to see efforts at

revitalization. There is a theater just across from the marina where I took in the play "Invitation to a Murder," which was well performed by a small cast of dedicated actors. Next day I bought an all-day bus pass (\$2.50), loaded the bike aboard, and rode over to Ft Myers Beach to pedal the seven-mile length of the island, both ways. This is a very popular destination and was crowded with tourists. I ate lunch at Hooter's because I love the shape of their burger buns. After that I caught the bus back to the mainland and from there took another bike ride, this time to the Thomas Edison Museum which includes his laboratory in much the same condition as he left it.



Thomas Edison's laboratory.

Ft Myers is a gateway to the Okeechobee Waterway which traverses the state, west to east, through a series of rivers, canals, locks, and, of course, Lake Okeechobee. It was originally constructed to improve commerce and possibly aid military deployments. The west side begins with the Caloosahatchee River. I caught a favorable tide which enabled us to cover 50 miles, through two locks and two bascule bridges, to anchor just below Moore Haven. This was the first night where mosquitoes presented a REAL problem, I suppose due to the fresh water.

April 1 began our sixth month of cruising. We navigated Moore Haven lock to enter Lake Okeechobee, which is the second largest US lake contained within the borders of a single state. Because of the low water level, the first few miles of "lake" was reduced to a narrow waterway with LOTS of alligators on both banks. We motored through that stretch to reach Roland Martin's Resort & Marina. Roland is a world famous bass fisherman and many tournaments are held at this location. Weather forecast predicted gusty winds in heavy thunderstorms so I initially decided against making the 30-mile lake crossing. Instead, I spent a few hours walking the nearby town of Clewiston, which is not much, and had lunch at Roland Martin's.

At 2pm I motored out to the open lake for a looksee, the skies were clear and waters calm so I decided to make the crossing. It proved to be a wise decision as quick passage was aided by favorable winds and we reached the eastern shore well before dark. It was early enough to make a Port Mayaca lock-through, but I elected to anchor outside in an effort to avoid mosquitoes. This proved not to be a wise decision as the winds picked up during the night and *Jitterbug* took a real pounding. I would have gotten a better night's sleep swatting mosquitoes. Live and learn.



Port Mayaca lock.

On April 2 we locked through Port Mayaca early and recorded two numbers of note on this day. *Jitterbug* achieved a single day mileage of 62 and the GPS odometer passed the 3,000-mile mark, ending the day at 3,033. This was made possible by a favorable tide and wind in the St Lucie River and by putting in a long day at the tiller. The upper St Lucie canal/river gets a bit monotonous, with only an occasional alligator sighting to add interest, so we just kept going until we reached an anchorage near Ft Pierce Marina at 7:45pm. Next day was another wind plus tide gift and we sailed 35 miles before resorting to partial motor power for an additional 16 miles, a 51-mile total. The anchorage this night was just north of the bridge at Melbourne. In the morning I tied off at the public dock for a visit to the library (right at dockside) and a walk through town. it is a very convenient anchorage.



Shoreline near Ft Pierce.

At this point *Jitterbug* was approximately 1,300 miles from her homeport and the log book indicated that it had taken 38 days to reach this position on the southern run. I felt I could make better time on the return trip due to warmer weather, longer days, more experience at the helm, and familiarity with the route. So I decided to keep sailing north, for the time being at least. *Jitterbug's* logbook and chart notations were a BIG help in navigation and anchorage selection. We made good time over the next several days, stopping at St Augustine for laundry, shower, bike ride, and leg stretch before continuing on.

All went well until an equipment failure occurred while crossing Cumberland Sound during rough seas. I had already lowered the mainsail and had the jib partially furled when we lost all steering control. *Jitterbug* took a few waves broadside (during which time her captain wet his pants) before turning up into the wind, causing the jib to flap wildly in irons. So I quickly furled sail (thank goodness for a furling jib) and looked aft to see the rudder foil twisted to the point where it was above the water line, rendering it of no use.

The only option was to start the motor and use its tiller handle to steer, which was made easier because the extra long motor shaft put the tiller above the rear deck. I was a very happy sailor when we finally rounded the point to enter the protected Brunswick River and motor up to Brunswick Marina. The dockmaster remembered *Jitterbug* and gave us a warm welcome. We removed the damaged rudder and placed it on the floating dock to learn that the side plates had sheared almost completely in half. It apparently had suffered previous stress fractures, which gave way in the heavy seas.



Damaged rudder.

This was Thursday, April 9, the day before Good Friday, so I had little hope of accomplishing any repairs until at least the following Monday and seriously contemplated ending the trip just there. But first I called International Marine (the Potter people), located in California, and related the problem to Bill. It seems IM had stopped using the wooden rudders years ago but he still had a few of those "old plates" in stock (at a nominal price) and would ship them UPS Overnight Express if I was willing to pay the high shipping expense. I agreed and he had someone package and deliver them to UPS within the hour, assuring their delivery the next afternoon, on Good Friday nonetheless. Now that is service, by both IM and UPS. The old plates had already been removed, the replacements quickly installed, and I was able to rejoin the northward bound fleet by late that same afternoon.

Progress north went well after the rudder incident. I stayed at several of the same anchorages and spent April 15 docked at Hazard Marina in Georgetown, South Carolina, for my hot shower treat. My birthday is April 19 so I rested a few days in Morehead City, North Carolina. I had met two very friendly sailboat cruisers, *Gandolf* and *DeGage*, who informed me of \$10 dockage at the Sanitary Restaurant. It is centrally located, well protected, and serves excellent food. We had dinner together the first night, after which the waitress brought out a birthday cake, warmed my heart.

North Carolina scenery.



The three of us played hopscotch for the next several days, battling some rough seas in the Neuse and Alligator Rivers. In fact, I cut the day short in the latter, docking at the Alligator River Marina to wait for the morning calm. It was a good decision since dockage was only \$1/foot. The temperature dropped into the low 40s, but crossing Albemarle was much easier in calmer winds. It was about this time that I met *Owl*, a Catalina that had been converted to look like a pirate ship. The makeshift sails rendered the boat so out of balance that *Jitterbug* actually passed her, the only boat that we passed during the entire six-month cruise.



The pirate ship *Owl*.

By April 24 *Jitterbug* had entered the Dismal Swamp. On the trip down the lockmaster had been very hospitable, both during and after the lock-through. At that time three of us went through the afternoon opening and he suggested that we spend the night at the free docks located just beyond the lock. In the morning he invited all of us to his office for free coffee and donuts, while giving a history of the canal and demonstrating how to blow a conch shell horn. When someone offered to pay for the refreshments, he told them to just bring him a Bahamian conch shell on the way home. I had brought him such a shell, but this was unfortunately his day off so I left it at his office with a note attached.

Cruisers *Gandolf* and *DeGage* had taken the deeper Albemarle Canal route but I met up with them again in Norfolk, Virginia. They were anchored in the harbor and coaxed me to stay for a few days but I continued on, taking advantage of the good weather to begin the long voyage up Chesapeake Bay. It was around this time that the GPS odometer registered the 4,000-mile mark.

That evening, while looking for an anchorage, I spotted what appeared to be small island, or peninsula but nothing showed on the paper chart or GPS map. Upon closer observation I determined that it was a load of large dredging pipes, maybe eight pipes, each ¼-mile long, secured in a bundle. One end of the stack was floating on a barge while the other end was almost submerged. This seemed a perfect wind block so I motored to within 50 yds on the leeward side and set the anchor.



Just after midnight I was awakened by a loud banging noise at the bow, as *Jitterbug* rocked in moderate waves. My first thought was that the anchor (a Fortress FX-11) had broken loose and we had drifted ashore. But when I exited the cabin I saw that we were still the same distance from shore, but now tight against the raft of pipes which were beating against the bow with every wave. I was bewildered as to the cause until I tried to free the anchor, at which point I realized what had happened. Only one end of the pipes was anchored so when the wind and tide shifted, the whole load had swung around 45 degrees into *Jitterbug*. The pressure on the anchor line was tremendous as it was holding the boat and the entire load of huge pipes against wind and tide.

I started the motor, trying to push everything forward enough to slacken the anchor line, but this just put more pressure on *Jitterbug's* bow and increased the banging. I had to do something quick before the boat was badly damaged. Cut the line and lose everything? That's just what I was about to do when I thought to tie an empty water jug to the free end of the line in the hopes of retrieving the gear later. I did so and re-anchored with the spare. In the morning the pipes had swung even further, completely over the water jug, which popped up on the other side, and it was a simple matter to pick up the entire rig, salvaging \$200 worth of gear. Chalk one up for quick thinking. I was already impressed with the holding power of the FX-11, but now have complete confidence in it.



Norfolk, Virginia.

Two days later, on April 28, we were docked at Annapolis City Marina, just across from "Ego Row," thus named because of the megayachts that tie up there during the day to visit Center City. It is one of the nicest stops we made on the entire trip; great restaurants, quaint shops, parks, a theater, and, of course, any sailing supply imaginable. If you can't find your boating need in Annapolis, it just doesn't exist. We stayed for two nights and enjoyed every moment, even through off and on light rain. The nasty weather gave me an excuse to purchase a high quality, offshore sailing jacket which came in very handy over the next several days.

I also replaced *Jitterbug's* bulkhead mounted compass since it had leaked its liquid. The town was buzzing with crew members preparing for the week-long National J-Boat Races scheduled to start that weekend, and, of course, our men and women in blue attending the US Naval Academy could be seen everywhere. One rainy evening I went to "Buddy's Crabs & Ribs" where I spent two hours tasting the various entrees offered at the seafood buffet. Consider Annapolis a must-see destination.



Annapolis City Marina.

Off and on rain continued for the remainder of the trip so I hunkered down under the leaky Bimini top wearing the new offshore jacket to keep warm, and we put in long days at the tiller. On April 30 *Jitterbug* made 57 miles up the Chesapeake Bay to spend the night at Chesapeake City, where I enjoyed a gourmet meal at the Bayard Restaurant. Next day's travel was only 17 miles on the C&D

Canal to Delaware City. That allowed for an early (dawn) start the following morning in order to catch the outgoing tide down Delaware Bay. The strategy worked well and we stayed at the tiller until dusk, enabling *Jitterbug* to log her longest day at 73 miles. At the Cape May Canal entrance, the New Jersey state line, two dolphins welcomed us home. We anchored for the night near Stone Harbor, New Jersey.

It was still raw, rainy, cold weather on May 3 when *Jitterbug* traveled the final miles through New Jersey's poorly maintained section of the ICW. We ran aground twice and had long waits at two draw bridges. The inside route is not even an option for boats needing more than a 30' mast clearance. We passed the Atlantic City casinos by early afternoon and tied to our home dock a few hours later. The GPS odometer read 4,367 miles. "Given enough time, one can travel anywhere."

After a long, hot shower I slept in my own bed for the first time in six months. *Jitterbug* did not go sailing the next day, she and her skipper content to recall fond memories. Next trip???

You can view individual locations at the following URL:

<<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=111589345590420229346.00046f3c53101103598c5&ll=26.843677,-83.935547&spn=5.898632,17.490234&z=6>>



Atlantic City, New Jersey.

## Racing Optimists on the River Plate

(From the DCA Bulletin #199)



How the youngsters race Optimist in the estuary of the River Plate. Fitzroy of the *Beagle* met with the same conditions...

### The International Scene

One industry adviser said that container lines need to lay up another 20% of their fleets in order to achieve profitability.

The world's first floating production plant of its kind will service small gas fields far offshore from Australia. The vessel will be "much larger than an aircraft carrier."

Eurocontrol (the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation) warned aviation authorities about the danger presented by high-flying kites and parasails propelling ships.

The Bayonne Bridge over the Kill Van Kull in New York Harbor needs to be raised because its air draft of only 151' limits dock access to container ships carrying less than 7,000 teu and bigger ships will be arriving once the Panama Canal is enlarged. Options include jacking the bridge up to 215', building a new bridge, or digging a tunnel and costs estimates range from \$1.3 to \$3.8 billion. Dredging the Kull to 50' is a separate challenge.

### Thin Places and Hard Knocks

Ships sank or nearly sank: The Syrian freighter *Lady Belinda*, carrying 16,000 tons of iron ore, sank in a river near Ho Chi Minh City, perhaps because of damage suffered when its anchor pulled free and the bulker drifted into two bridges over a weekend. Nobody was on the ship and it did not block river traffic.

The 1999-built German cargo ship *Pacific* sank 100 miles off Gabon in West Africa in calm seas and the crew of 13 was rescued by the Danish bulk carrier *Nord Explorer*.

On Lake Pyasino in Russia's far north a small, privately-owned tug was capsized by stormy weather and sank. Seven people were trapped inside. Five survivors were found in two lifeboats after weather improved.

A "ship" (size not specified) carrying bags of gravel sank about two miles northeast of the breakwater at Mataró (Barcelona), Spain. The crew of two was rescued.

Ships collided and allided: The small cement-carrying Greek freighter *Kapetan Michalis* sank in shallow water after colliding with the Maltese-flagged *Santana* off the island of Amporos and the ship's cook drowned.

A "ship" doesn't have to be big. Take the 40' cigarette-type speedboat that ran under a bridge closed to boat traffic, then tried to navigate a winding channel through Long Island salt marshes at speeds perhaps as high as 65mph. The boat ended up 150' from the water with three dead and four seriously injured.

In the North Sea the well-stimulation vessel *Big Orange XVIII* lost power while approaching the Ecofisk production platform and the bridges connecting various outlying platform components. It hit one unit, slid under a bridge (damaging the vessel's topsides), and then hit the jacket of the well platform and ended up under another bridge. It was pulled free by the supply vessel *Northern Crusader*. Production was stopped and all pipelines were depressurized.

Also in the North Sea the 130,000-tonne shuttle tanker *Loch Rannoch* collided with the 144,000-tonne floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) vessel *Schiehallion*, stopping production for up to six months. This is not the first time this FPSO has had problems with a shuttle tanker. The *Savonita* ran into its stern in 1998.

In the Houston Ship Channel, while the 451' chemical tanker *Chemical Supplier* was trying to turn around it struck the bunkering barge *Buffalo 251*, puncturing its tanks and causing a messy 10,500gal oil spill that closed three miles of the Channel for several days.

## Beyond the Horizon

By Hugh Ware

Ships ran aground: The *Arctic Sky*, sister to the notorious *Arctic Sea*, was travelling a well-known route but went on the wrong side of the lighthouse at Yndersten and was aground.

The Fijian barge *Bawaqa* left Lautoka loaded with building supplies for a new health facility at Viwa but started taking on water. Cargo was jettisoned but in the end the crew and passengers had to swim for it while the barge was being deliberately grounded on a reef. Some cargo was salvaged.

The crude-oil tanker *Eagle Tucson* went aground near the mouth of the Mississippi River but was refloated by six tugs without a spill.

In northwest Germany the bulk carrier *Algo-ma Discovery* ran aground in the Weser near Brake and eight tugs were unable to free it. Part of the cargo of 27,000 ton of steel coils was then lightered.

Fire and explosion took a toll: An explosion in the engine room of the bulk carrier *Master Davidov* 50 miles off Spain injured the master and a crewman and both were airlifted to Coruna. The crewman later died from his injuries.

Humans got hurt: Off Taiwan the naval captain of the Taiwanese navy's submarine *Hai Kung* slipped and fell overboard. His body was recovered after an extensive two-day search.

At Durban in South Africa one worker was killed and another seriously injured when they became trapped between a container and a ship's hull.

At Freeport on the Grand Bahamas fumes from the bunkers on the container ship *MSC Turchia* sent ten stevedores to the hospital for observation.

At Long Beach, California, a driver waiting beside his truck for a container to be dropped onto his trailer was struck by a yard tractor driven by a drunk operator. A week later at the same port two containers tumbled from the deck of the *Xin Fei Shou* onto the bunkering barge *Webb Moffett* moored alongside. No injuries or leaks but the barge needed extensive repairs.

A day after the Long Beach accident and across the continent at Halifax, Nova Scotia, a dockworker was struck and killed by a shunt (a device to carry containers).

A Chinese seaman severed a finger in a winch on the *Apollon Leader* while it was in the Gulf of Alaska heading for Japan so a Coast Guard helicopter took him to Kodiak for hospitalization.

A Coast Guard helicopter rescued a fisherman from the *Rio Panama* 130 miles off Galveston. He had been struck in the head by a block and had trouble breathing.

Other events: In the North Sea the Danish-owned ro-ro *Maestro Sun* lost power and steering in bad conditions but was able to anchor and radio for help. A helicopter took off many of the crew as the ship waited for the tug *Stevens Icequeen* to arrive. The tow was the first job for the new tug, which had arrived from Canada earlier that week.

Huge waves ripped off 6,000 tonnes of the *Portstar's* cargo of 11,000 tonnes of sawn lumber while the ship was about 100 miles from the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia's

Far East. The ship sent out an SOS because it had a 30° list at times.

### Gray Fleets

A stripped-out RAF helicopter flew to its maximum range to pluck an injured sailor from the Canadian frigate *HMCS Montreal*. He had a badly crushed hand.

In the UK the Tynemouth lifeboat went out to fetch an injured seaman from the Belgian minesweeper *BNS Crocus*. His leg was broken and badly cut when a cable snapped while raising an anchor.

And off the coast of Washington a Coast Guard helicopter took a sick sailor off a US Navy submarine.

In international waters off Columbia the frigate *HMS Iron Duke* seized more than five-and-a-half tons of cocaine in a cooperative "high-speed pounce" with the US Coast Guard. It took more than 24 hours of searching to find the cocaine hidden beneath regular ship's stores on the 138' fishing boat *Cristal*. It was the third big drug bust by the *Iron Duke* in recent months.

The US Navy is "moving out aggressively" to put women aboard the service's 71 nuclear-powered submarines.

Five sailors were washed off the deck of the Australian submarine *HMAS Farncomb* in March, 2007, as they tried to clear fishing lines from a propeller during an intelligence-gathering deployment. They were saved and three rescuers recently received bravery awards.

### White Fleets

Two hundred miles south of Oahu an elderly man was airlifted off the cruise ship *Carnival Spirit*. He was suffering from the effects of running out of a vital medication.

A woman with severe abdominal pains was airlifted from the *Sea Princess* off the northwest Washington coast.

The US Coast Guard searched for a woman who was missing from the *Sapphire Princess* while in transit from Ketchikan to Vancouver but a video later showed she had jumped and her family said she had a life-threatening illness. Other reports said she had sold her house to her church.

Off Vietnam five tourists drowned when a tour boat slowly listed and submerged its first and second decks in heavy seas. Some of the 20 passengers aboard managed to climb up to the third deck from where they were rescued by other boats.

At Cozumel in Mexico strong winds caught the *Carnival Legend* as it was pulling away from a pier and it kissed the nearby *Enchantment of the Seas*. A tugboat had tried to keep the two ships apart but failed. Minor damage to both cruise ships and no injuries.

The *Princess of Norway* was on its way to Amsterdam when an elderly man suffered a stroke. He was airlifted by a RAF helicopter.

The cruise industry sued the state of Alaska, seeking to overturn the tax of \$46 per passenger because the funds were being used for purposes other than those benefiting the cruise industry.

### Those That Go Back and Forth

In the Baltic Sea the Finnish ferry *Mariella* drifted powerless for 45 minutes while almost 1,200 passengers worried just a bit.

On a Texas ferry dock a woman's big SUV jumped a curb and pushed over a lamppost. It struck and killed a ferry worker directing traffic. She may have had an epileptic seizure.



On another Texas ferry dock (the ferry operating between Galveston and Bolivar Island) a car accelerated over a traffic cone marking a lane without a ferry and plunged into the water where it floated for several minutes. People in other vehicles tried to dive in for a rescue but were prevented by security personnel. The driver, a male, died.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo yet another overloaded ferry was overcome by a strong wind. It sank, carrying with it at least 15 of about 100 passengers. The crew then went into hiding.

Waves as high as 13' helped sink a wooden ferry in eastern Indonesia and only 29 of 59 passengers were saved.

The Philippine ro-ro ferry *Butuan Bay* had to anchor off Misamis Occidental for several hours while engine repairs were made. The Coast Guard checked that its 117 passengers and 52 crewmembers were safe. Because of this incident and so many others, Philippine authorities have been enforcing safety regulations for that nation's large ferry fleet. Several operating certificates were suspended while inspections were made.

In Washington, on Puget Sound, a bicycle left on a Bremerton ferry triggered a search for its owner. The Coast Guard used both a helicopter and a small boat in the search.

At Islip, New York, an engine room fire on the *Fire Island Belle* 100 yards from shore was promptly quelled by a built-in fire extinguishing system.

Ferry service in Sydney Harbour was ordered stopped for several hours after the Australian city was swallowed in a dust storm and visibility was down to dangerous levels.

At Sierra Leone, the wooden ferry *Teh Tehe* (or possibly *Pam Pam*) sank while travelling from Shenge village to Tombo during a storm. At least 120 people died and over 100 others were listed as "missing." Only 39 survivors were rescued. Authorities learned of the accident after a survivor floated ashore on a 20-litre plastic container.

### Legal Matters

Investigations into why the Filipino *Superferry 9* sank off the Zamboanga Peninsula focused on possible failure of the crew to seal the side entrance. The master had repeatedly maintained that the initial list never exceeded ten degrees.

A report stated that the most likely cause of the sinking of the 189' fishing/processing boat *Alaska Ranger* in March of 2008 off Alaska was the loss of its rudder. The sinking killed five crewmembers.

### Illegal Imports

In the Gulf of Aden 16 migrants died and another 49 were missing. Eleven suffocated, three were fatally beaten by the smugglers, and two drowned in three separate incidents involving at least two boats.

Off western Australia the *HMAS Glenelg* was dispatched to intercept a boat carrying 98 asylum seekers. They will join about 1,500 other refugees detained on remote Christmas Island.

Spanish and Moroccan authorities picked up eight bodies and 11 people from a capsized boat but thought another 50 might be dead. Some survivors claimed their boat had been hit by a larger ship.

### Metal-Bashing

The Croatian nation has to sell its six state-owned shipyards but accepted market-price bids on only two yards. The other yards

will be sold for one kuna (about 20 US cents) each. The catch is that a new owner must assume considerable debt or invest in the yard.

Even new ships have problems, especially if built by a "greenfield" shipyard (one recently created out of open countryside). The China-built handysize bulk carrier *Zeus 1*, delivered in July, was detained at Wellington in New Zealand until 37 faults were corrected. Most of the problems involved safety and communications equipment.

A report from an unspecified source claimed that some 1,300 workers were killed in the last 12 years while ship breaking at Chittagong, Bangladesh, and 6,000 were seriously injured into disablement. Nine years ago funds were raised for a hospital but it has not been built.

The Norwegian supply boat *Viking Lady* will have the world's first fuel-cell installation on a merchant ship that generates electricity. The test unit can create up to 320kw. The cells operate at high temperatures and thus can use natural gas, sewer gas, biogas, landfill gas, ethanol, propane, etc.

### Nature

The Italian Mafia was reported to have sunk three toxic-laden vessels off Calabria and murky photos seemed to show two bodies near yellow barrels marked with the word "toxic." Some of the waste may be nuclear in nature.

Dredging of parts of the Hudson River to remove PCBs reached the end of the first phase. More than 240,000 cubic yards of material were dredged and taken ashore where it was de-watered and shipped to a special disposal site in west Texas. Progress was slowed by unexpected PCB hot spots, wooden debris from Adirondack logging, and cold weather.

A massive spill from a cargo ship oiled the coast of Guangdong Province as Typhoon Kopu swept the region. The Panamanian-registered ship hit rocks due to heavy winds and rain.

Nine miles off Savannah, Georgia, the tanker *Stolt Vision* was lowering its anchor when it punctured a fuel tank below the water's surface. This spill was limited to 97 gallons.

### Nasties and Territorial Imperatives

Somalian piracy continued much as before although patrolling warships were searching more skiffs and mother ships and confiscating piratical apparatus. And one night two boatloads of pirates attacked what seemed to be a merchant ship, only to find *La Somme* was the French Navy's command vessel for the area. The pirates lost the ensuing hour-long chase and battle.

The Syrian master of the *Barwaaqo* was shot and killed in a hail of bullets when he refused to turn away from the destination port of Mogadishu. First reports said pirates did the killing but later reports suggested that it was a Mafia-style deal that had gone wrong and it was Somali security forces that were responsible as they rescued the ship. It was owned by the same company that owned the *Wael H*, another vessel involved in a controversial shootout last year. In both incidents the cargo was cement.

### Odd Bits

New York City will get a powerful new fireboat. It will be named *Three Forty Three* after the 343 New York City firemen killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. The new boat can pump 20,000 gallons per minute as a fireboat and 50,000 gpm while acting as a pumping station. A forward ballast tank

can be filled to lower the fireboat's deck level even with the decks of the city's larger ferries.

And Tampa Bay ports will be protected by a new fireboat, probably the world's fastest at 40 knots. The *Patriot* can pump 10,000 gpm and features a downward-looking sonar and a draft of only 28" because most of Tampa Bay is shallow over a coral bottom. However, the delivery crew managed to run the fireboat ashore near St Augustine. Photos showed it ashore on a beach in walk-around water.

On the Ohio River a 250-ton gate of the 1200' lock at Markland in Ohio fell off and standard 15-barge tows had to use the smaller 600' lock, which meant splitting tows into two sections.

And on the Columbia River engineers found extensive cracking in the downstream gate at the the Dalles dam and closed it to navigation. Several barges were unable to use the locks but luckily the peak transportation season had passed.

Due to floods created when Typhoon Ondoy swept Manila, seven Filipino Coast Guardsmen used the City's LRT (light rail transport) to transport them and their deflated rescue boat to Marika for rescue work. There, they saved between 70 and 80 individuals of all ages and retrieved three bodies.

An Irish shipping firm announced a new service between Dublin and the fascinatingly named Tin Can at Lagos, Nigeria. Investigation revealed that the destination is really the Tin Can Island Port. And there is another Tin Can Island, but it is in Tonga?

Want 30,000 tonnes of coal? It's up for grabs from the owner-abandoned and insurance-less bulk carrier *Seli 1*, which ran ashore off Cape Town's scenic beaches.

Over several days, a US Navy veteran argued with his New York City ferryboat skipper about how to fly the American flag correctly and lost his job because of the debate. The official position was that he had disobeyed an order from his boss.

Divers who recovered nine-and-a-half tons of gold and silver bars from the sunken trawler *Polar Mist* off Argentina reported that one basket fell as they were pulling it out and they lost it and its seven bars of metal. Maybe so, but do read some books about divers and salvage, similar "losses" of recovered goods seem to be a standard feature of many diving operations.

### Head-Shakers

In Belgium, at Boudewijnsluis, the master was docking the chemical tanker *Stolt Petrel* when he heard the engine sound change as the controllable-pitch propeller shifted itself to full astern. He tried two control consoles, had the chief engineer try to alter the propeller's pitch, and then used the emergency shutdown to stop the engine. He also ordered both anchors dropped and had a mooring line run ashore, where it was made fast. The line parted and the ship hit the dock at 3 knots. Probable cause was intermittent failure of an old servo control board.

An arachnid-like crustacean set up home in the parachute recess of a 600lb mine dropped by the Luftwaffe off Dorset some 60 years ago and it became irritated when Royal Navy divers tried to extract him. After Lionel the Lobster nipped one diver, the decision was made that Lionel had to become part of the bomb disposal process. After the explosion's spray settled back to the surface, the divers had a moment of silence in memory of the plucky lobster.

There are those who believe sailing fast means advanced composites with high-tech fibers, exotic cores, and plenty of cash. Very few think of wood when they think of fast, but before carbon fiber, before Kevlar™, there was wood.

I'm not talking about those great big lumbering tall ships or schooners. I'm talking about the pioneers of boat building and fast sailboat racing. Men of vision who saw wood not just as planks and large hunks of trees to be bolted together, but as an engineering fiber. Men like Walter Greene, Jim Brown, James Wharram, Dick Newick, and the Gougeon Brothers, Joel, Meade, and Jan.

Meade and Jan were first introduced to epoxy resins by Vic Carpenter, a boat builder who was one of the earliest users of epoxy as a structural adhesive to build boats. Vic built the Olin Stephens designed 36' *Yare* in 1963 using strip-planked Honduras mahogany. In 2008 it was the second oldest boat in the Bayview Mac race, the 46th Mac race for the boat, with a second place finish in their class to add to their 11 firsts. Fast as it is, it is still basically a traditional style boat that employed epoxy adhesive in the build.

The wheels started turning. The brothers enlisted the help of some friends who worked for Dow Chemical in formulating an epoxy adhesive that could be also used as a coating to take advantage of epoxy's excellent moisture resistance.

Soon the three brothers began using the newly formulated epoxy system to build improved DN iceboats. These rapidly began winning races due to the added stiffness and durability the epoxy provided the wooden structures. Everyone wanted one. By 1973 Gougeon Brothers Boatworks was the largest builder of iceboats in the country. In 1975 they sold the iceboat business to concentrate on selling epoxy and building larger custom boats. Joel focused on managing the fledgling epoxy business and didn't race nearly as much as his brothers. Through it all, Meade and Jan never stopped racing.

Here's a quick list of Meade and Jan's winter sailing accomplishments in DN's: Meade won the North American title in 1980 and again in 1997 when he was 58 years old. He is the oldest person ever to win the North American DN championship. His record still stands today.

Jan won his eighth North American DN championship in 2000. That's more than any other American sailor. He won four World DN championships over the course of three decades (1972, 1982, 1985 and 1991) and also won the Great Cup of Siberia Race in Russia in 1989.

Currently Meade and Jan are ranked 25th and 18th respectively in the Gold Fleet world standings of the IDNYRA (International DN Ice Yacht Racing Association). They vow to improve those positions this year.

2009 marks the 40th anniversary of Gougeon Brothers, Inc. Over the years an impressive number of fast boats emerged from the Gougeon Brothers boat shop including 14 production/custom water ballasted, trailerable, catamarans, the Gougeon 32 (G32). The original G32 promo footage is posted on our website at [mrwww.westsystem.com/Vss/history/](http://mrwww.westsystem.com/Vss/history/).

I say the G32s were production/custom boats because they are all mostly the same, but like all things Gougeon, each build sparked ideas and innovations that found their way into the next build.

## Pioneers of Speed

By Bruce Neiderer  
Reprinted from *Epoxyworks*



The Brothers built several high-profile racing sailboats that advanced and refined the construction techniques they developed while building iceboats and a series of experimental trimarans beginning in the late 1950s. Together they built an experimental 25' trimaran to IYRU Class C rules that marks the start of their early racing success at the 1963-64 NAMSА Championships at Stamford, Connecticut. Building on this success and experience, Meade constructed *Victor T* in 1967-68. He got the boat's weight down to 320lbs and it earned the distinction of being the lightest Class C competitor in the 1969 Nationals in Hamilton, Ontario. There, *Victor T* took home the win against a strong field of wingmast-powered catamarans.

Next came *Adagio*, launched in 1970 and believed to be the first all-bonded and sealed wooden structure built entirely without fasteners, using a unique building method which they called "developed plywood construction." She's a testament to the longevity of wood/epoxy construction, and to the competitiveness and seamanship of her only skipper. Meade has racked up a long and impressive string of trophies throughout the Great Lakes.

Meade first raced *Adagio* in the Bayview-Mac (Port Huron to Mackinac Island) race in 1996 and placed second behind another boat that many have come to know well (and also built with WEST SYSTEM® epoxy), *Earth Voyager*. The result of the long love affair between Meade and *Adagio* is an impressive race history on the Great Lakes which continues today.

*Adagio's* Port Huron-to-Mackinac race finishes: 1998 2nd; 1999 1st; 2000 1st; 2002 1st; 2003 5th; 2004 5th; 2005 1st; 2006 1st; 2007 5th; 2008 5th; 2009 2nd.

*Adagio's* Chicago-to-Mackinac finishes: 1998 1st; 2000 1st to finish; 2002 1st to finish; 2006 1st to finish; Reick Trophy, 2008.

In 1973 they built an Olympic-class Tornado catamaran using vacuum-bagged, cold-molded construction. US sailors David McFaull and Michael Rothwell sailed the boat in the 1976 Olympics and took the Silver medal behind the German team.

The Gougeon Brothers also began construction of *Golden Dazy* in 1973 for Dr. Gerry Murphy from the Bayview Yacht Club in Detroit. *Golden Dazy* generated a lot of press and won the 1975 Canada's Cup. She's still sailing today in upstate New York.

In the mid-'70s the Gougeon Brothers built a Class C catamaran designed by the Hubbard Brothers. The boat was named *Patient Lady*.

I'm sure some of you will remember the fast monohull the Brothers built next, *Hot Flash*. This Gary Mull design was commissioned in 1976 by the Usnis brothers, also from the Bayview Yacht Club in Detroit.

In 1977 the Brothers began building *Rogue Wave*, a Dick Newick-designed 60' trimaran for Phil Weld. He had planned to race it in the 1980 OSTAR but never had the opportunity because of a rule change. Weld did win the 1980 OSTAR, setting a record for the race that year onboard the well-known *Moxie*, designed by Newick to comply with the new rules. *Moxie* was built by multihulls guru Walter Greene, a user of WEST SYSTEM epoxy who is also a good friend of Meade's.

At the Gougeon shop construction also started on *Flicka*, another plywood cruising trimaran. Jan spent four long days on the capsize *Flicka* in the Atlantic Ocean during a qualifier for the next OSTAR challenge. He had plenty of time to think about rightable trimaran designs before a passing freighter rescued him. *Flicka* had to be abandoned at sea.

In 1980 Jan designed and began to build *Splinter*, a developed plywood trimaran designed to be rightable after an offshore capsize. *Splinter* was the second boat, after *Adagio*, the Brothers launched with a wingmast. She is now owned and raced by Bob Struble (father of A-Cat and DN champ Matt Struble) in Saginaw Bay and competes against *Adagio* and another noteworthy Gougeon built boat, *Ollie*.

Named after the Gougeons' grandmother, *Ollie* was started in 1984 using the developed plywood technology the Brothers had developed over the years. The design was trademarked as a Stressform 35 along with Stressform wing mast plans. *Ollie's* design advanced Jan's ideas for self-righting.

Although Jan can be nostalgic for the boats he's built, particularly *Ollie*, he hears a different drummer than Meade. Jan is always thinking of the next boat, whether it's right around the corner or a few years out. A difference of even greater significance is Jan's appetite for solo sailing and he's done plenty.

Jan raced *Splinter* in the singlehanded Port Huron to Mac race beginning in 1981. He placed first that year and first again in both 1982 and 1983. In 1984 the weather forced most, if not all, of the multihulls off the water, including Jan's. Race records from the '80s are hard to come by, and I thank Blair Arden of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society for digging through his old records to help fill the blanks. In one of the three races in 1981-83 Jan set a new record for the fastest finish. Jan couldn't remember which year it was over, which is typical of Jan. Once the race is over he's taking what he learned and applying it to the next race, the next boat design, the next build, the next challenge.

His record was short-lived because in 1985 he broke his own record for the race in *Ollie* with a time of 26:09:00, a record that still stands. Weren't we all in awe of the fully crewed *Earth Voyager* completing the race in just under 25 hours a few years back? Jan and *Ollie* ran up a string of firsts from 1985 through 1991



and in 1989 he earned the Peter Fisher Award with his win. Jan also won the singlehanded SuperMac in 1987 with *Ollie*. That race ran from Port Huron to St Joseph (just south of Benton Harbor, Michigan) setting another record that still stands today with a time of 77:40:00. The next finisher that year was the C&C 41 *C-Spray* with a time of 123:59:00, 46 hours and 19 minutes after Jan. The loss prompted the skipper of *C-Spray* to retire the monohull from future singlehanded races!

In 1995 Jan raced his G32 *Pocket Rocket* in the singlehanded classic to claim another first. In 1997 *Pocket Rocket* was the only multi entered so he scored another first. In 1998, this time with some competition, he finished second.

At times Jan and *Ollie* have taken some crew with them. 1995 marked the first time multihulls were allowed to race in the Port Huron to Mac race and *Ollie* finished third followed by Meade and crew on *Janet C*, a G32. In 1996 *Ollie* finished third behind *Adagio* and *Earth Voyager* and in 1998 *Ollie* finished eighth.

*Ollie* was sold to Tim Walli and Dave Sturm in 1998 and didn't race again that year, but in 1999 *Ollie* was back with the new owners and Jan as crew. She finished second behind Meade and *Adagio*. In 2000 *Ollie*, with Jan as crew again, suffered a fatigue failure in a stainless fitting and retired from the race. Jan has not raced on *Ollie* since.

The Brothers also built a couple of other noteworthy and well-known boats. The multihull *Slingshot* was launched in June of 1978. Commissioned by Georg and Carl Thomas, *Slingshot* was built to compete in the speed trials in Weymouth, England. *Slingshot* was 60'x4.5' HBx42'BOA and weighed in at 1,800lbs plus a crew of four. She could sail in both a proa configuration and a trimaran configuration. She recorded the second fastest speed in 1979 at Weymouth behind the famous *Crossbow I* which recorded a speed of 31.8 knots, blistering fast in 1979. Jan reports that later that year in Florida they posted an unofficial speed of 40kts. Racing the ditch in Texas City, Texas, in 1980 with a crew of Jan, Mike Zurek, Ron Sherry, and Olaf and Peter Harken, they posted a speed of 38kts. But alas, during a storm *Slingshot* came loose from her mooring and was dashed against the rocks and lost forever. All that remains of her is a section of the bow hanging in the Gougeon boatshop.

*Adagio*



The last commissioned boat the Brothers built was *Adrenalin*. Started in 1984 and launched in 1987, she was a trimaran with articulating amas built to Formula 40 rules for Bill Piper of Ossineke, Michigan, and intended to race in the European circuit. She shocked the sailboat racing community by placing a very close second in her first regatta on the Grand Prix circuit in 1988.

She raced for two seasons in Europe against the traditional big cats until, as Jan put it, "They couldn't stand being consistently beaten and changed the rule so the boat became illegal and only cats could race." *Adrenalin* was purchased by New Zealander Grant Beck in 2007 and is awaiting his attention to get back on the water.

Advancing age has not seemed to slow down either Meade or Jan. This year they sailed Meade's G32 *Janet C* in the 2009 Chicago/Mac race to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the company they started together. Being 70 and 64 years old respectively, they no doubt had the oldest average age in the race. *Janet C* finished third in the Chicago/Mac race and a week later Meade, Jan, and Butch Babcock finished second in the Port Huron-to-Mac race on the 39-year-old *Adagio*.



*Rogue Wave*

*Splinter*



*Slingshot*



*Ollie*

*Adrenalin*



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I'm writing to share a couple of stories about my Bolger Jinni Sharpie design #426 that I built in 1996. Her name is *Helgaflundra*, Swedish for "halibut," and yes, the name is longer than the boat. I came across the name in my Swedish-to-English dictionary when I was trying to translate some old letters from my great-grandmother. I thought the word had a nice flow to it. *Helgaflundra* is often referred to as "The Yacht," due to her nice finish, varnished mahogany gunwales, varnished masts and sprit booms, and bronze hardware scavenged from old Sunfish hulls.

"The Yacht" had a few years' rest on her trailer because of different issues. During that time my old Sunfish had been used for sailing but I always had "The Yacht" on my mind, often thinking to myself, "I have to get her in the water, have to!" Soon after that I began contemplating ways to launch her without having to use a trailer, unreliable outboard, or the city ramp which is about a half-mile in from the Sound. I'd done that in the past but it really is a hassle setting the mainsail afloat after getting out to the Sound, especially when the beach access is two-and-a-half blocks away from my house. I live in Milford, Connecticut, right on Long Island Sound, only ten minutes away from New Haven, and yes, the birthplace of the New Haven Sharpie.

Using some ingenuity I figured out that my boat weighs around 200lbs with everything stripped off, meaning a couple of guys could lift it onto a Jet Ski dolly and pull it to the beach access. I figured a Jet Ski must weigh 300-400lbs so putting my 200lb boat on it wouldn't tax the dolly at all. The Jet Ski dolly was borrowed from my neighbor, Tony. Thanks, Tony! I was now one major step closer to launching.

The next step came along all on its own. I was talking boats one day with my beach friends, Tom and Marcia, after a Sunfish session. "The Yacht" came up in the conversation and they generously offered to let me chain the boat to their fence, which is right on the beach access only steps from the water. That was ideal. Now I wouldn't have to pull the boat two-and-a-half blocks down the street every time I wanted to take it out. Thank you, Tom and Marcia!

With all the pieces in place, I arranged to have my friends, Dave and Mark, come down to help me get "The Yacht" to the beach. While we were waiting for Mark, Dave and I lifted the boat onto the dolly and secured it with a trailer strap. Luckily that was easy, too easy, we both admitted. We knew

## "The Yacht"

By Darren Garlock



we wouldn't have been able to do that had it been a fiberglass production boat. When Mark arrived he was surprised we had gotten it on the dolly already. We loaded all the necessary parts on the boat, masts, leeboards, and so on. Then we proceeded to push the boat down the street, creating a spectacle along the way. One can do this with only two guys, one to push and one to pull and steer. It moved quickly, allowing us to make the beach access in about five minutes as it glided over the sand with a graceful ease. Once there, we unloaded the boat and began to set up. Everything went smoothly.

The original plan was just to get the boat to the beach, but temptation for a quick sail was there, sunny, clear, small waves, and the wind was slightly off the beach, north at around 10mph. Not the best but not too bad either. The wind gets churned up and becomes shifty close to the shore, having to pass through the houses. I decided to go out for a quick sail. I began setting up the boat, putting in the first row of reef points for safety. Dave had to go so I thanked him for helping. Mark decided to stay and go out with me. Tom came over to help us launch, made sure all the lines were clear, that the leeboard was down a little and the rudder down.

After all that had been finished we left the beach, hitting puffs of wind disturbed from the shore making the boat accelerate rapidly in short bursts. Mark had the mainsheet and I had the mizzen sheet and the tiller. Since Mark isn't a sailor (he will be soon) I would instruct him to either pull the line in,

out, or slack it. We made a few passes by the launch site and headed out a little further. I could see a line of ripples heading towards us still a ways away. I knew it was a gust coming so I instructed Mark to slack the main but to not let it go.

With the gust quickly approaching I pulled in the mizzen sheet tight, Mark slacked the main and we both kneeled down in the cockpit to get our weight low. Then it hit, all hell broke loose. The boat started tipping to starboard, the gust caught the mizzen, and we were turned back upright and into the wind. The mainsail was slatting at a deafening volume. All we could do was stay down low and mind the sheets. That was the longest minute I ever had on the water. I was grateful to have a mizzen sail that day. We would have been knocked down without it.

After the squall had passed, I asked Mark how he was doing and he replied, "Man, that was awesome." He was fine. He'll be a sailor all right. He'd done a great job handling the main and keeping his cool for a first-time sailor. I then announced we were going to head back in. I didn't want to get hit by more of those gusts. It had to have been blowing at about 25-30mph, a conservative estimate. We ended up getting back in down the beach a little from our launch site because of the shifting, varying wind. We walked the boat back to our spot, took the masts out, and went rowing just off the beach for a while.

I had a couple more outings with "The Yacht" in the following weeks. Both days were much more enjoyable than the first. Mark came back for another shot. I hadn't scared him off yet. It was a nice day with light clouds, steady wind of the SE at around 10mph. We used full sail that day, moving along at a nice clip. The wind died down later in the afternoon but a quick look over the side at the leeboard confirmed that we were still making forward progress. When running downwind the mizzen adds more drive. Coming back in at low tide I got the chance to exploit the handiness of shallow draft by gliding between two sand bars in 6-8" of water, then on through a tide pool to the shore. That's one of my favorite Sharpie tricks, on-lookers can't believe it when they see a 16' boat sailing through a tide pool.

The next time was a late afternoon quick sail. The weather was too perfect to pass up. Wind out of the SW at 10-12 and high tide. That day I rigged the boat using only the main set full and one leeboard just to keep rigging time down. For this outing my sister, Julie, and my daughter, Erin, came along. We

All set.



Heading out.





milked that perfect weather for about an hour. "The Yacht" was moving along quickly, heeling through the foot-and-a-half waves without pounding while my two passengers had a great time helping balance the boat and trimming the leeboard in between relaxing.

Here are some of the questions and comments I've gotten about the boat: Is that an antique? What kind of boat is that? How old is that boat? Did you build that boat? What are those for? (referring to the leeboards). What kind of sail rig is that? I've never seen a rig that before, it's beautiful, what's it called?

I did build the boat, finishing it in September of 1996 with a good deal of help and woodworking guidance from my father. He had as much fun as I did through the whole process. We built the boat to the plans except for a few things after corresponding with Jim Michalak (builder of the prototype). I used a

1/2" plywood bottom instead of 1/4". The modified leeboards are carriage bolted with wing nuts through the sides and butt blocks. I fitted a slightly increased mizzen sail of 33sf in place of the 27sf. Jim also sewed the sails. Great job, Jim, thanks again.

One improvement has been the addition of ballast. I feel this is an important addition to such a light boat being sailed in a seaway on Long Island Sound. I use two sand bags weighing 80-100lbs total when sailing with less than three people. This helps to give the boat the power of momentum for tacking in waves, increased stability, and helps trim the boat for an improvement sailing performance.


*Helgaflundra* has proven to be a very capable boat which has exceeded my expectations quite impressively. She is well suited to my sailing area and my requirements; freestanding rig, large cockpit, no expensive

hardware, and low upkeep cost. She's fast, stable, turns on a dime, and turns heads, too.

Thank you to the late Phil Bolger for a great design. Her beauty is her simplicity.



Reefed.



**Rick Carrion,  
President**

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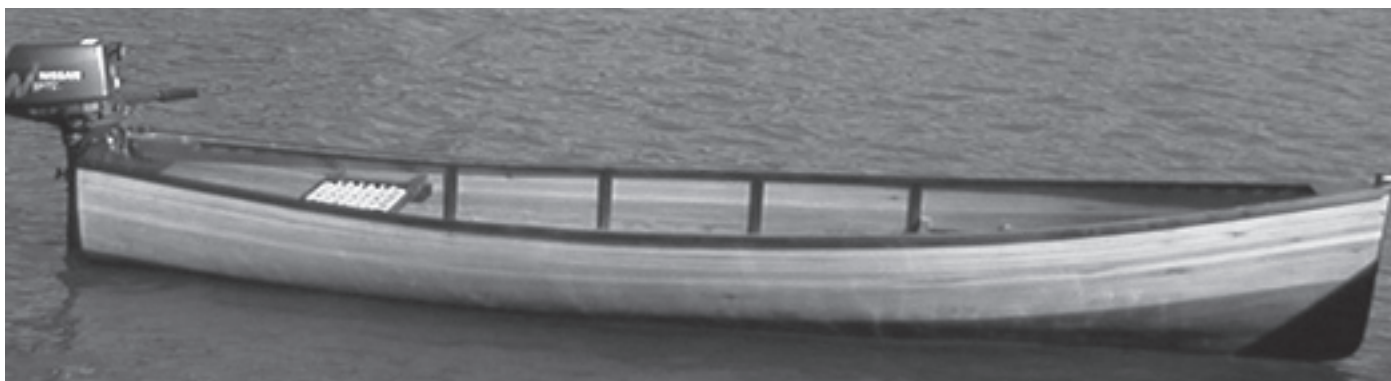
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Finished boat in water.

I began corresponding with Robb White around 2000. I had purchased an un-built 12' plywood rowboat kit called a Bay Hen. The plans showed an exploded view of the boat with each part numbered. Each part on the kit had a penciled on number to match the exploded view. I wrote to Robb White to find out how to build this 1950s kit boat using 2000 technology. Robb was quite helpful, providing me with many recommendations. These exchanges were the beginning of a years long "pen pal" relationship. When Robb wrote an article for *Messing About in Boats* about his Sportboat, I was interested and wrote to him again.

At this time, I was volunteering at Maryville High School in Maryville, Tennessee, in their cedar strip canoe building classes (I'm a retired teacher of special needs students and the students in these classes are also special needs students). I mentioned to the teacher, Mr Martin Walker, that I was interested in building the Sportboat. He thought building one alongside the students while they were building their cedar strip canoes would be a good idea.

I built a cedar strip Sportboat in 2004. I believe I sent in a short article about it to *MAIB* at that time. The boat turned out pretty well. I took it to the WoodenBoat Show at Mystic Seaport in 2008 where I entered it in the "I Built it Myself" section. The boat received favorable comments. Several people attending the show had plans to build and several were in the building process. I passed out some cards with information regarding how to obtain plans for the boat.

Due to the fact that we have a small travel trailer and I cartop the Sportboat while traveling on vacation, I began to consider building a second boat a bit shorter. I con-

## A Shortened Sportboat

By Henry Champagny

tacted Robb for his opinion. He suggested moving the seven stations closer together. But, he cautioned that shortening the length might affect the unique characteristic of the boat's getting up on plane quickly. When I mentioned to Martin Walker that I was interested in building a second, but shorter, boat he invited me to come back to school in the Spring 2009 semester to begin this process.

Someone had given Mr Walker some railroad tie-sized pieces of black walnut that he said I was welcome to use for the transom, gunwales, frames, and seats. With that offer, I couldn't resist! We went to the local lumber yard and were allowed to pick through several hundred 1"x6"x16' western red cedar boards. I paid \$14 each and bought nine boards. I think we found the best looking boards with the fewest knots and imperfections. We sawed and resawed these into 3"x1"x16' strips then put them through the shaper for bead and cove.

As I began construction on the second boat, I recalled the difficulty I had experienced "torturing" the strips at the front of the first Sportboat where the boards twist 90° in a few feet. Therefore, I didn't want to shorten it there. I also didn't want to change the "throw down" or "hook" of the last two stations, so I just moved the middle stations closer together from 24" apart to 20". I had hoped to end up with a boat that was 14' long, but it ended up being 14'6" long. The boat does not go on plane like the old one, but it is a great boat

nonetheless. The first boat had a very plumb bow because one of the students cut the bow incorrectly and I had to make a plumb bow or else start over. The new one has a more traditional clipper bow.

I made laminated frames, six plies of .080"x1" wide black walnut strips and epoxied in the boat. I chose that .080" thickness as that was the thickness I needed to follow the molds without breaking. Since the boat is shorter, they are spaced closer together. This process was much easier for me than the sawn frames that I had to fit in the other boat. I believe it makes the boat somewhat lighter also. Speaking of weight, the boat weighs 94 pounds.

I placed the front seat the same distance back from the bow on the second boat as I did on the first boat. This was a mistake as the boat was bow heavy, especially with a heavy passenger up front. I subsequently moved the seat back over a foot and now it is trimmed out nicely. If someone inquires about building a shorter version of the Sportboat, I would recommend using a milk crate or something similar for a sample seat to get the trim correct before permanently installing the seats. Most of my boating is done with two people aboard. There is plenty of room for two people, even with the shorter length.

Mr Walker is building a Sportboat for himself this fall and is planning some kind of moveable front seat. He is using cypress, as the local lumberyard had some beautiful straight grained lumber relatively reasonably priced. He is making the two-ply laminated transom, seat frames, and gunwales out of Philippine mahogany.

For most of my boating, I use a 1950 Chris Craft Challenger 5½hp. In the salt water, I use a 2000 4-stroke 5hp Nissan. This

Stations and transom on strongback.



First Strips on.







Six strips on.



Twenty-four strips on.



Closing the gap.

boat seems more rugged than the first one, although I am not sure why. Because of this apparent greater strength, I thought I would try a little more powerful outboard on this boat. Recently I bought a 1949 Champion 7.9hp and a 1951 Martin "75" for this purpose. The Martin "75" was Robb White's outboard of choice.

Since May, I have gone boating on the Coosa River in Alabama, along the coast of Charlestown and Westerly, Rhode Island, on the Connecticut River in Connecticut, on the St Joseph River in southern Michigan, and on the Intracoastal Waterway around Charleston, South Carolina. Of course, this is in addition to riding around on our home waters of Tellico Lake in eastern Tennessee.

I have been very satisfied with the decision to build a shorter version of the original Sportboat. If someone would ask me about building a shorter version I would recommend it. The shorter version is much easier to launch and retrieve!! Happy Boating!!



Planking completed.



Torturing the cedar strips.



Popped off mold

First epoxy inside.



Laminated frames installed.



Gunwales epoxied on.



As well as being a long-time member of the Scottish Canoe Association, I have been a member of the Historic Canoe and Kayak Association since its early years and currently I am its Chairman. It was brought to my attention that two old clinker-built canoes had been uncovered recently at Haddo House in Aberdeenshire, the home of Lord Aberdeen.

I knew that an earlier Lord Aberdeen had accompanied John Macgregor in 1865 on part of his trip of a thousand miles in the "Rob Roy" canoe. Macgregor's book of this adventure proved to be very popular, running to at least 13 editions, and gave rise to the modern sport of canoeing as we now know it, certainly in Europe. Only two years later the Hon James Gordon, the younger brother of the Earl, crossed the channel in his newly-built canoe at the start of an adventurous trip during which he paddled and sailed on the French rivers Seine and Rhone, the Mediterranean Sea, and from Lake Lucerne in Switzerland down the Rivers Reuss, Aar, and Rhine.

Tragically, neither brother lived long enough to expand on their initial exhilarating canoeing activities, the Lord being lost at sea and James dying in a shooting accident. I wondered if it was possible that these old boats were the ones used by the brothers. It would be truly fantastic if that turned out to be the case!

So, on February 17, 2009, I accompanied Graham Mackereth, another member of the HC&KA and one of the major canoe manufacturers in the UK, on a pre-arranged visit to Haddo House. On arrival Lord Aberdeen showed us a cast plate bearing the following text:

"The upper boat is the canoe which was designed by the late Hon James H. Gordon, and in which he crossed the Channel from near Dover to France in 1867.

"The other boat is a Rob Roy canoe which belonged to the Sixth Earl of Aberdeen and in it he navigated the Rhine and other European rivers."

That was a good start! We were then escorted to the estate sawmill where the boats were awaiting our inspection. They were lying side by side with various associated items, paddles, floorboards, removable deck piece, cutwater, etc, close by. These we quickly fitted in place, each to its appropriate boat, and pictures were taken in location. Lord Aberdeen departed to attend to his day-to-day estate business, leaving us to take the boats outside for better light to make a more detailed examination.

The Hon James H. Gordon's boat was the easiest to identify, it still had its name faintly visible on each side of the bow, *Pooion*, which I am told is Greek for wave or surf. Its

## Lord Aberdeen's Canoes

### A Short Report for the Historic Canoe and Kayak Association

By Duncan L. Winning, OBE

dimensions and other characteristics are as described in James Gordon's account of his travels in 1867. The clinker-built hull has five oak planks a side while the deck is in four pieces of cedar, one each side of the cockpit, one forward, and one aft. The overall length is 14'½" with a beam of 26", the cockpit is 54"x19½", but the opening can be shortened to 32½" by fitting a portable section of deck at its forward end. A very effective removable cutwater increases the effective height of the bow by some 7" tapering to some 5" over a length of approximately 29". Leather straps are installed in various positions, apparently for securing the paddler's luggage.

However, perhaps the most notable feature is the centreboard, its casing being positioned just forward of the cockpit. It could be lowered and raised by cords which are secured on the side decks within easy reach of the paddler without disturbing the apron. There was no sign of masts or other rigging.

Of similar clinker build, the Sixth Earl's boat is considerably larger at 16'6" long by 28" beam, with six planks per side, this time of fir (possibly larch) as described by Macgregor in his *Thousand Miles...* Cedar has been used for the deck, similarly to that described above. The cockpit is very long at 5'2", rounded at both ends and is 17" wide. We were at first puzzled by the existence of provision for footrests at both ends of the cockpit until Graham spotted two metal reinforced holes on each side deck, then three similar holes in the each sheer strake.

We surmised that these are for the fitting of portable outrigger rowlocks to allow the canoe to be rowed as well as paddled, a perfectly acceptable method of canoe propulsion in the early days of recreational canoeing and would account for the two foot rest positions, one for facing forwards when paddling and one for facing backwards when rowing. This arrangement could also explain the rudder fitted to the stern post, a feature not common in Rob Roy canoes as far as I know. In the rowing position the occupant would be seated further forward than when paddling, which would suggest that the craft would be out of trim. Consider if there was a passenger seated at the other end of the cockpit facing forward

they could see ahead and control the course by cords attached to the rudder yoke while his companion applied himself to the oars, a more powerful form of propulsion, better suited to cope with the weight of the two bodies on board.

Basic sketches of both canoes are appended to this report, showing the dimensions recorded on this preliminary examination.

Two paddles are among the material accompanying the canoes. One is 7' long, has flat pear-shaped blades, 17"x6½", and is of similar style to that depicted in early sketches by Macgregor. The second is 8'6" long with spoon blades 18"x6". At first it was considered that, James being a Cambridge Rowing Blue, it was more likely that the spoon blades would be associated with his canoe. However, since then examination of enhanced prints of two rather poor quality illustrations from James's account of his voyage clearly shows that he was using pear-shaped blades. Also, the lengths of the paddles are more appropriately matched to the beams of the canoes in this solution.

It is not possible to overstate the importance of these two craft in the history of recreational canoeing in the United Kingdom. Indeed, in my opinion this is the most important historic canoe find in this country in my lifetime! The Sixth Earl accompanied John Macgregor on a major part of his *Thousand Miles...* voyaging, only returning prematurely due to the pressure of running a recently inherited, very large family estate. His canoe ranks with the first Rob Roy in its place at the very beginning of our sport.

I understand that the Hon James's craft was the first recorded example of a canoe being fitted with a centreboard, enabling it to tack into the wind. This would make it the starting point of the process which developed paddling canoes fitted with a small auxiliary sail into the International 10 square metre class sailing canoe of today, modern day cruising yachts and one-design racing (the first recorded one-design being from the board of the famous Glasgow naval architect and yacht designer George L. Watson, for three sailing boats, *Red*, *White* and *Blue*, built for the Clyde Canoe Club, to be raced round the buoys from their Rosneath clubhouse).

Considering the age of these craft, they are in remarkably good condition, perhaps due to the well-ventilated, unheated area in which they were stored. There is a little woodworm at one end of the Earl's canoe but this is quite treatable. It is most befitting and to the credit of the present Lord Aberdeen that he is having both craft appropriately preserved and proposes to have them installed in a suitable building adjacent to Haddo House where they will be available for viewing by the public along with a fine four-oared boat presently being restored and a venerable carriage, both from the estate.

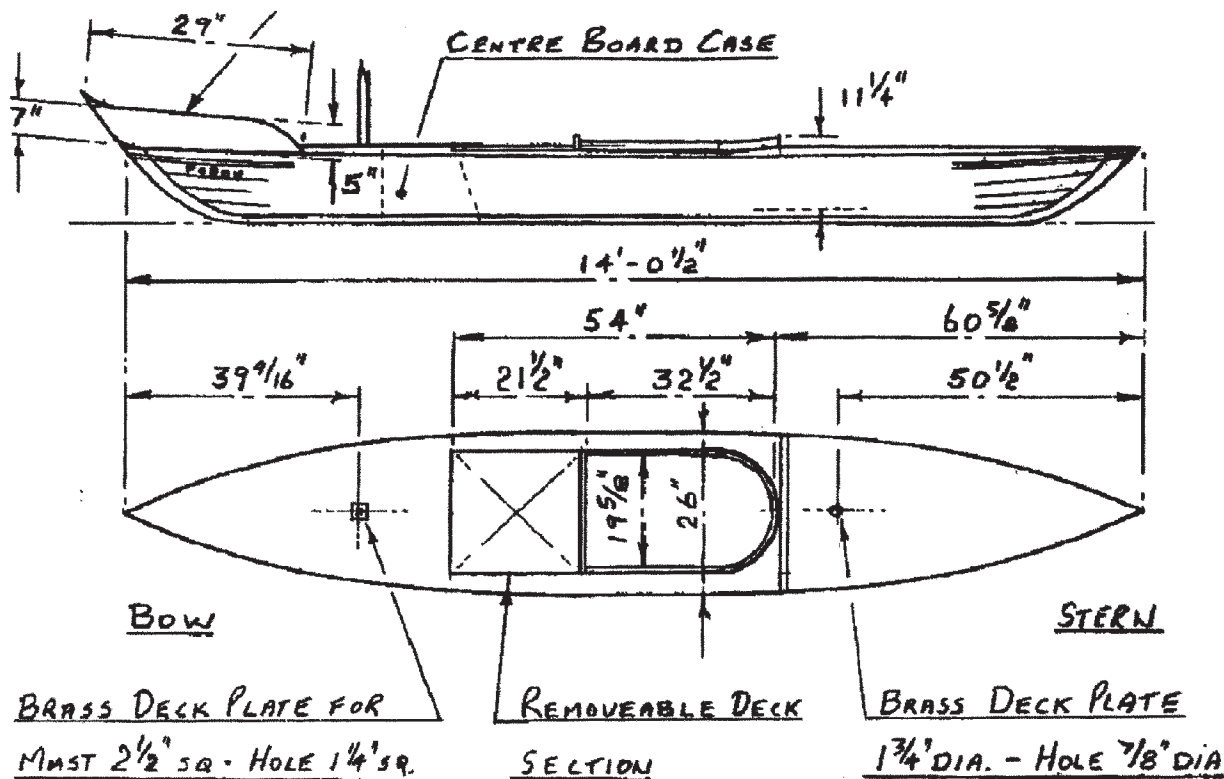
Altogether a most satisfying day with the hoped-for fantastic outcome realized!

**Editor Comments:** The Hon James Gordon's chronicle of his voyage in the Pooion appeared in our September issue as "A Canoe Voyage in the Pooion."

(Readers interested in learning more about the Historic Canoe & Kayak Association and their journal should contact: Tony Ford, Am Kurpark 4, 37444 St Andreasberg, Germany, Tel: +49-5582 619, Email: tford@web.de)





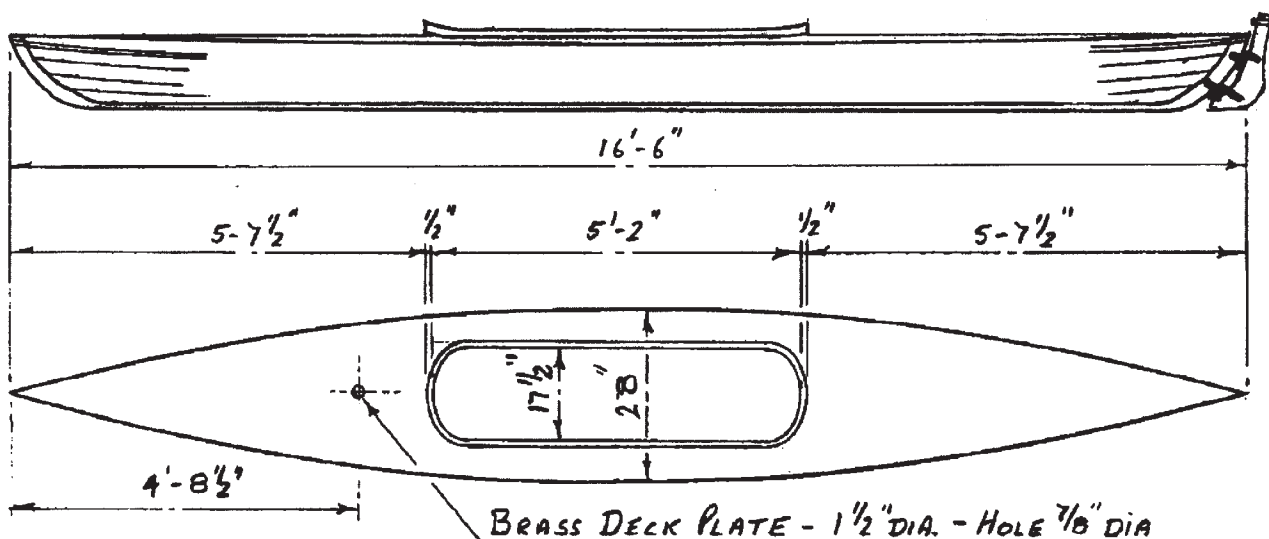


14/04/09

THE HON. JAMES GORDON'S SAILING CANOE  
"P D B I D N"

INITIAL SURVEY AT HADD HOUSE, ABERDEENSHIRE, FEB 17<sup>th</sup> 2009

BY GRAHAM MACKERETH AND DUNCAN R. WINNING OBE.



14/04/09

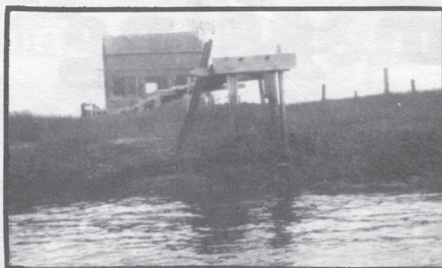
THE SIXTH EARL OF ABERDEEN'S CANOE

INITIAL SURVEY AT HADD HOUSE, ABERDEENSHIRE, FEB. 17<sup>th</sup> 2009

BY GRAHAM MACKERETH AND DUNCAN R. WINNING OBE

# Commentary

BOB HICKS



## The Clubhouse

On a kayak outing on Columbus Day (covered elsewhere in this issue) we stopped by alongshore on Plum Island Sound by a weatherbeaten old "cottage" with a rickety dock extending to the water's edge. Scenic backdrop. Chuck Sutherland remarked on wouldn't that make a nice clubhouse. We agreed. Somehow in this boating game the lure of some sort of "clubhouse" located in an ideal spot for one's preferred way of boating is a strong one. Of course, this has resulted in numerous yacht clubs having clubhouses, some of them very expensive real estate ensembles indeed.

The kayakers are more like the hikers, though. The Appalachian Mountain Club maintains a major system of "huts" in the

mountains of New England for overnight shelters in favored hiking locales. As our kayak group contemplated this picturesque old cottage as a clubhouse, someone immediately elaborated upon the theme by suggesting that a string of them would be nice, located all along the coast at favored spots. Unlikely, but an attractive vision.

This theme of some sort of "snug" shelter pervades boating, on larger craft than kayaks the shelter moves onto the boat to go wherever it does. Cuddy cabins, boom tents, ever more elaborate and spacious accommodations as size increases. It must have something to do with the exposure to the elements that boating creates, even in protected waters one can be out without shelter in adverse weather conditions. Paddling back to the clubhouse across a wind or rainswept body of water brings back the charms of the cave for prehistoric man, I guess.

Well, we all could fantasize having that tumbledown cottage as a clubhouse. It was weatherbeaten but still standing square despite who knows how many winters out on those windswept saltmarshes that line the western shore of Plum Island Sound. If a place is funky enough and weatherbeaten enough, it escapes from that fix-it-up urge that seems to come over some people. Fix up the old place just enough to keep out the worst of the weather, furnish it with old used but comfy chairs, sofas, tables. No electricity and all its modern intrusions. No thoughts of painting or fancying up the place. Just inside

## 25 Years Ago in MAIB

space of comfortably rustic sort where like-minded boat nuts can gather to indulge in that very significant aspect of boating, talking about it.

The fantasizing never does get to the point of being concerned about how to buy (or rent) the dream clubhouse. This is a reality that just gets in the way of the dream. Owning it means a mortgage, income schemes to support that, concerns then about fire or storm damage. Once one owns an object it has a tendency to assume ownership of its owners. Maybe renting? Less concern about the "value" of the real estate but still the matter of creating the income to pay the rent, in some way so that all who share in the pleasures also share in the costs.

Again, all of this is old hat to the yacht clubs, be they little local town groups with a float and a bit of shore property or a more elaborate country club sort of affair. These groups have long since dealt with all the realities of owning a clubhouse from which to venture forth in their boats. With many members at anywhere from \$200 to \$1,000 (or more) a year in dues, plus non-profit tax status, plus initiation fees, plus member work requirements, they have made the fantasy come true. But in so doing, have they somehow transformed it from the simple yearning for congenial shelter into something that has come to be an end of its own?

Looking at that cottage on the shore of Plum Island Sound, I just couldn't see that sort of thing happening. To keep its appeal (were it indeed available for renting) and simplicity would require the dedicated support of a small group who all believed in that simplicity and were willing to come up with the rent for a season (several thousand dollars most likely) uncomplainingly. Others with me who viewed this possibility also probably paddled off as did I thinking that it's a nice dream, but...

*Editor Comments 2009: Several years ago I was out on Plum Island Sound again and noticed that our "clubhouse" was no longer there. Sigh...*

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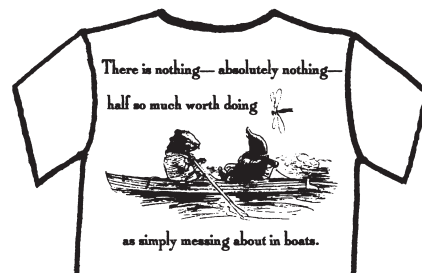
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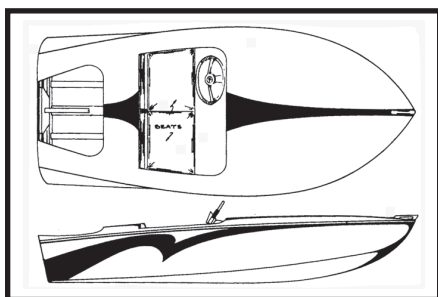
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# GLEN Top Ten Designs

## #1 Squirt A 10' Runabout Build In Plywood



### Characteristics

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Length overall   | 10'0"  |
| Beam   | 4'4"   |
| Hull depth   | 20"    |
| Hull weight (approx.)  | 120lbs |
| Average passengers   | 1-2    |
| Hull type: Vee bottom, hard chine hull, developed for sheet plywood planking |        |
| Power: Outboard motor to 10hp  |        |
| Trailer: Designed for use with Glen-L Series 650 boat trailer plans          |        |

### Description

The Squirt, a small runabout for the young at heart. But don't let her size fool you, she offers a lot in her short length. This little boat will move out quicker with less horsepower than the average production boat because of the lightweight construction. Traveling at even modest speed in a boat of this size can be a thrilling experience. Since the motor is normally the major expense on a small boat, her "thrill without horsepower" makes Squirt an ideal boat for the builder on a budget. The combination of smaller horsepower requirement and generous freeboard makes this a good boat for the younger set.

We have taken special care in designing this boat as it is most often a first boat. Construction is kept simple. As economy is always of prime importance on a small boat, the cost is kept to a minimum by the judicious use of materials.

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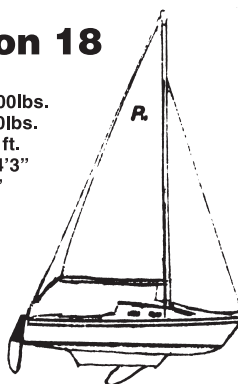
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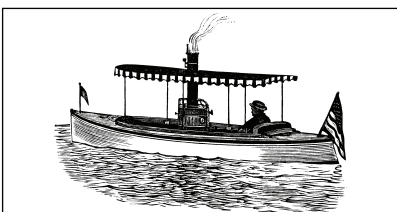
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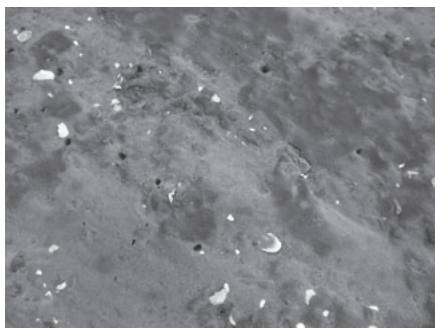
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Setting the anchors.



Off to work, barely an inch of water covers the flats. In background Hog Island's original old colonial homestead.



Tiny holes (black spots) signify clams somewhere under there.

First dig.



Second dig (deeper).

A legal size clam (knuckle to fingertip), just right for steaming.



## Clammin' with George

By Bob Hicks

The sunset was quite spectacular in the big sky out over the sand flats of Essex Bay. Clouds, which had been moving threateningly in our direction, had partially disappeared and their tattered remnants created a dramatic skyscape. George was still bent over digging clams, but at last he looked up and acknowledged that maybe it was a bit later than he realized.

Essex Bay was only just beginning to return from its tidal exodus into Ipswich Bay and *Ms Phunstuph*, George's modified Bolger Nymph (*MAIB*, August 2008) had just re-floated off the sloping bank of the nearby channel. In the gathering dusk the sand flats still stretched away to Hog Island and the backside of Crane's Beach. "I guess we'd better start back," George allowed. Back was some four miles or so to the marina at the head of navigation on the Essex River where *Ms Phunstuph* was kept.

But, it turned out, we could not return via the direct route we had taken out on the falling tide mid-afternoon as it was now blocked by sand flats yet to be re-submerged. We'd have to take the long way around, out over the gradually flooding sand flats to the mouth of the Essex River where it emptied into Ipswich Bay and then back following the meandering marked channel on the incoming tide. That tide was just beginning to cover nearby sand flats and in the dimming light it was no longer easy to see the shallows. *Ms Phunstuph* has shallow draft but the outboard lower unit hung down there and, as George gingerly began to find his way over towards the channel marker near the river mouth, we were soon aground. It was beginning to look like it might be a while before we got back.

A year ago George Thompson had invited me to join him aboard *Ms Phunstuph* for a short outing on the Bay. George had bought a used Nymph hull and turned it into a unique 10' cabin skiff for his part-time clamming. At that time we could not dig clams because the flats were closed for a long time due to red tide. Now, in August of 2009, George had even gotten a one-day clamming permit for me so I, too, could dig. Windows of opportunity for clamming are unpredictable, apparently every time there is significant rain the flats are closed for five days due to pollution running into the Bay from upstream on the river. We had a cool rainy spring and summer and the five day closures backed up on one another.

We left the marina mid-afternoon on the falling tide and motored out into the Bay, *Ms Phunstuph* powered by a new 4-stroke 20hp Honda outboard, a great improvement over the used 9.9hp 2-stroke Evinrude that had filled the tiny cabin (open at the back) with noise and fumes. Our trip was timed to arrive at the chosen flats just as they were losing the last thin layer of water and were ready for digging. After some time spent rigging two anchors so *Ms Phunstuph* would not be left high and dry, George was ready to go to work. We'd be there for the next three or four hours.

After a preliminary survey in which George looked for concentrations of the little holes that indicated clams lurking below, he marked out several of the most promising spots with his boot toe and set to work digging. After observing the technique a while it was my turn to dig (George had only one clamming fork). In sum, this involved adopting a bent-over posture (about 90 degrees) with upper body horizontal, grasping the fork so as to press it into the sand at an angle pulling a top layer up and back towards my boots, looking for signs of clams that might be revealed, making a second deeper dig to reveal the clams, and picking them out of the sand and putting them into a bucket.

While I was thus occupied George fussed over the mooring anchors for *Ms Phunstuph* as the tide was now dropping rapidly and he did not want her to be set too firmly aground.





Still digging as dusk comes on...

A distant shower passes by.



After about a half hour of digging I had a modest supply of clams in my bucket and was noticing my lower back sending out signals that it was increasingly objecting to the demands being made upon it. I relinquished the fork to George and became a spectator henceforth as I have avoided lower back troubles for years by heeding my body's signals.

My harvest was hardly adequate for serious clamming and my major flaw in technique was spearing too many clams on the fork, the tines going right through the shells. What was required was a more sensitive digging technique, working through the buried clams gently to avoid doing this and ruining them. George, of course, had this mastered and also seemed to have a lower back unaffected by the 90-degree posture. On he dug, moving from place to place, occasionally relocating *Ms Phunstuph* to keep her afloat nearby, and I spent the next couple of hours just enjoying being out there in so spacious a marine environment under that big sky.

And now were headed back in the gathering gloom. We hit bottom several times as George groped towards the channel marker, fast fading into the gathering darkness. Each time he'd raise the motor and await a bit of tide to float us off. On one such occasion we heard an outboard approaching from behind at obviously high speed and soon an aluminum skiff sped by us off to our right, its operator apparently calmly confident that its he knew where he was going. Not so, for soon we heard a long "scru-u-u-unch" and the motor noise suddenly ceased.

Finally the marker loomed up out of the darkness. There are no dwellings around the Bay so there were no shore lights to guide us. It was really getting dark but now all we had to do was follow the channel markers in. Not all that easy as none are lit and we had no spotlight, not even a flashlight. This was not a contingency George had anticipated.

While lights from Conomo Point, a colony of former summer homes partway back towards the river, could be easily seen, the

channel to get there meandered all over, to head straight for them was to invite more groundings. What saved us was our cabin top white light lighting up the reflective channel marker buoys. With some stretching of necks and wide-eyed staring into the darkness we gradually picked up the buoys one by one and finally entered the river where the banks nearby could be faintly seen. It was 9pm when we arrived in the blaze of light along the Essex Causeway with all its clamshack restaurants, and tied up at the marina.

A couple of days later, Jane shucked the clams, chopped them all up, mixed in condiments, and served up my harvest on the



...while *Ms Phunstuph* awaits our departure.

Really time to go!



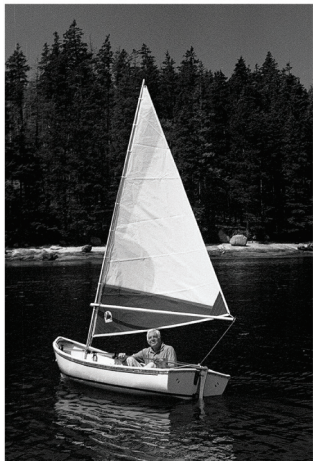
half shell as stuffed clams. A first ever experience for her (as was my digging them for me), she came to realize why the cookbooks all start off recipes for stuffed clams (neither of us could stomach steamed clams) by stating "empty the contents of a can of chopped clams into..."

And so ended another unique adventure in our lives, we're certain that there'll never be another of its ilk. I have the greatest respect for those hardy souls who dig clams for a living and to George Thompson who does so as a part time income producer for his retirement years. Man that is plain hard work. And my back...

When not hauling clams *Ms Phunstuph* loves to dance!



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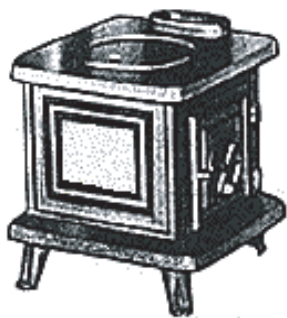


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## From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew

A coil of line always looks so nautical on a boat. The problem comes when we try to use that line and it falls into a tangled mess. Now we have to untangle the line before we can use it. Since old line seems to want to tangle more than new line, I guess we need to keep purchasing new line so we are not standing there untangling the mess while others watch.

This observation came back to me the other day when I needed to move my boat in order to work on the transom. I retrieved two 20' sections of old docking line to tie together for the length needed to reach my neighbor's dock. The idea was to tie the boat between the docks and sit on my dock while doing the work. The work was accomplished after I untangled the two coils and tied the line together to make the necessary distance.

To avoid the same kind of problem with my anchor rode, I store it coiled in a bucket. The line comes out with no tangles and gets coiled back in after use. This was how those who chased whales from small boats kept the line from the harpoon to the boat from being tangled as it ran out when the whale died.

My wife and I own a Puffin. It is a small, cat-rigged sailboat that we keep on a trailer. One time, when I was pulling the boat and trailer out of the muddy launch area, I left the tongue jack down. This mistake cost me the "J" hook that kept the tongue jack lowered or raised horizontally for towing. The dolly wheel on the base of the jack dropped into a ditch and the forces involved sheared the pin. I used a  $\frac{3}{16}$ " bolt (with nut) to keep the jack up or down as needed. Using two wrenches and the time to take off the nut, remove the bolt, change the stand, and then re-bolt got to be a pain (in the back among other places).

Checking at a trailer store I found that they did not carry spares of this type of thing and that every tongue jack manufacturer used a different style or size of pin to hold the jack up or down. Since the odds were very poor to find a replacement, I built one using a full-thread  $\frac{3}{16}$ " bolt and a nut to hold the spring in position. Pulling this rig out to move the jack was a bit much (even with a ring attached to the head of the bolt). The next thought was an "eye" bolt of the proper diameter and length. "Plan B" worked! I now have a usable tongue jack that is easy to reposition for towing the trailer.

My headset, used when flying, developed a loose wire problem. I sent it back to the vendor for repair. As with a number of other electronic repair operations, once the requested repair is made the item is run through their standard quality control to see if anything else needs repairing. The process with the headset reminded me of a time many years ago when a sailboat we owned with another couple was hit by lightning and sank at the dock (the through-hull speed paddle-wheel was melted).

Among the items to be repaired/replaced was the bulkhead mounted compass. I contacted the manufacturer about the possible problem and was told to ship it back. There was a standard repair cost. What they did was run compass through their quality

control, replace what needed replacing, and put the compass back together.

Oh yes, if your boat sinks, be ready to replace all the electrical wiring unless all the connections are sealed and coated. The twisted strands used for flexibility also are great wicks and soak up water quite quickly. I had a battery cable fail in one boat simply from condensation building up at a "low point" in the cable run and the moisture corroded the twisted wire quite nicely.

I have found that stainless steel is not always "stainless" in the magnetic sense of the word. It seems that there are a number of types of stainless. What brought this to mind is a large rudder I salvaged from a sunken sailboat (about 33"x16"). The rudder had been in the salt water for about ten years and had become overgrown with barnacles and other marine growth. After cleaning off the growth, I had a fairly good rudder and stock assembly. However, the metal failed the magnetic test, leaving me wondering just what it was in terms of metal.

I sent out a query on one of my email lists and learned that stainless steel gets that way by being alloyed with chromium. Stainless which has nickel in the alloy is not magnetic, but so-called "400 series" stainless has no nickel in the alloy and is magnetic. Also, the "400 series" is used with induction cookware which has to be magnetic in order to work with induction heating. Thus, it seems that I have a nice piece of stainless steel plate and stock that is not "stainless" in the magnetic sense of the word. But is "stainless" as far as those selling such materials are concerned.

One weekend I was checking things over on the boat when I discovered that the automatic float switch had stopped working. I pulled the spare out of storage and got ready to remove the old switch and install the new one. At that point I found out that there was a bad connection on the new switch at the fuse holder and I could not remove the current wiring ties to trace the ground wire to its connection to the boat's wiring system (needed sharp side cutters). Off I went to the store to get a new float switch. The "spare" with the bad connection came with mounting screws and a fuse. The new switch did not have either. By using the screws and fuse from the spare I was able to connect the new switch (after cutting the wire ties and tracing the ground connection).

I contacted the manufacturer of the float switch about what I considered the missing pieces, only to be informed they did not include screws or fuses with the float switch as different mounting material takes different screws and different pump loads require different fuses. Thus, if you are purchasing a float switch any time soon, check before leaving the store that you have the appropriate fuse and mounting screws or you will be at the boat without what is required to make the float switch useful.

By the way, the bilge pump and float switch on my boat are mounted on a piece of lead that fits the bilge. The lead provides the mounting point and weight to hold down the pump and switch. The hose is long enough to allow me to move the pump/float switch along the bilge to pick up water at other than the slump point (if such is necessary). The hose is also long enough that I can remove the float/pump assembly to work thereon without leaning over in the bilge once the assembly is removed from the very reachable hose.



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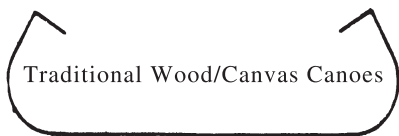
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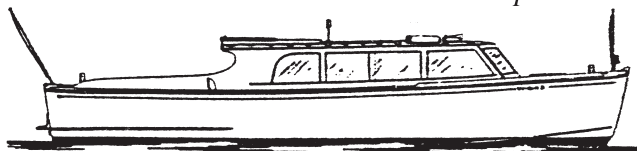


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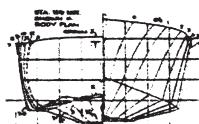
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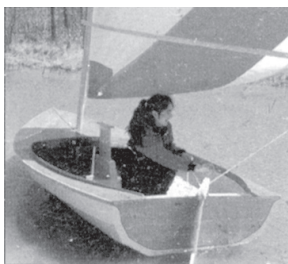
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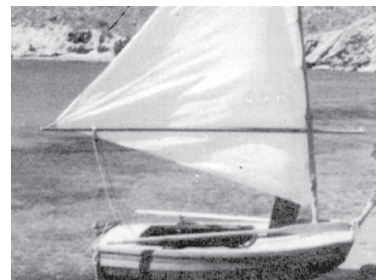
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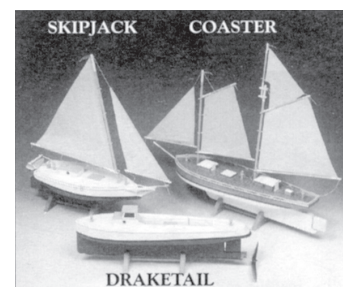
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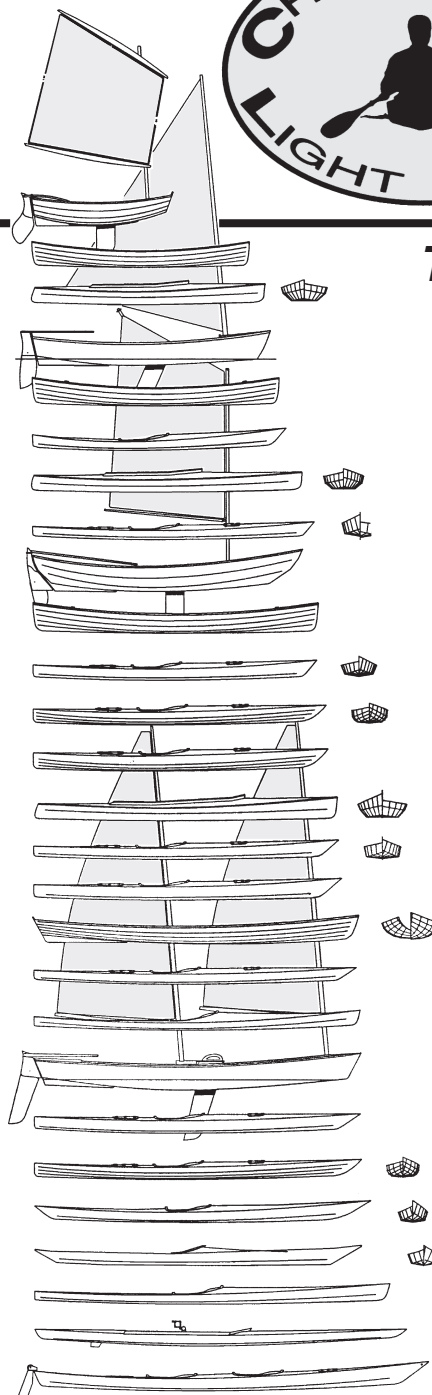
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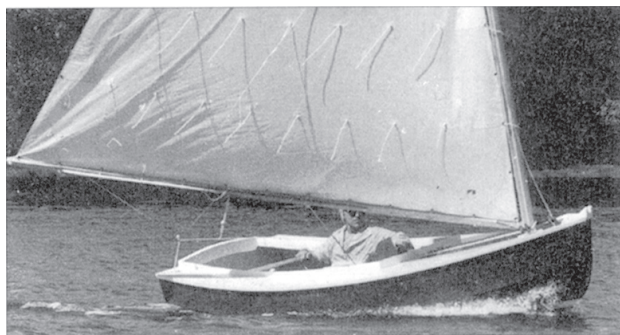
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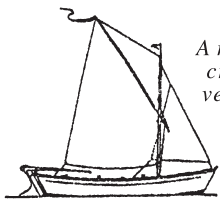
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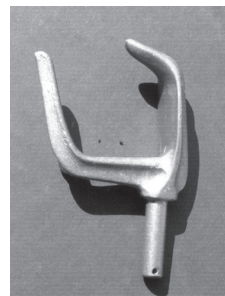
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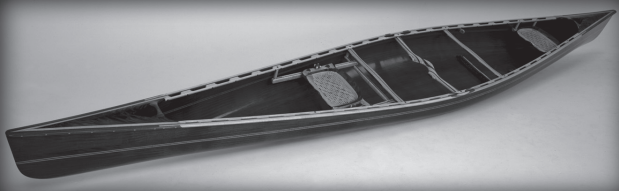
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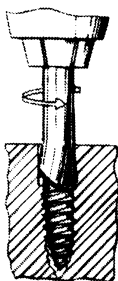
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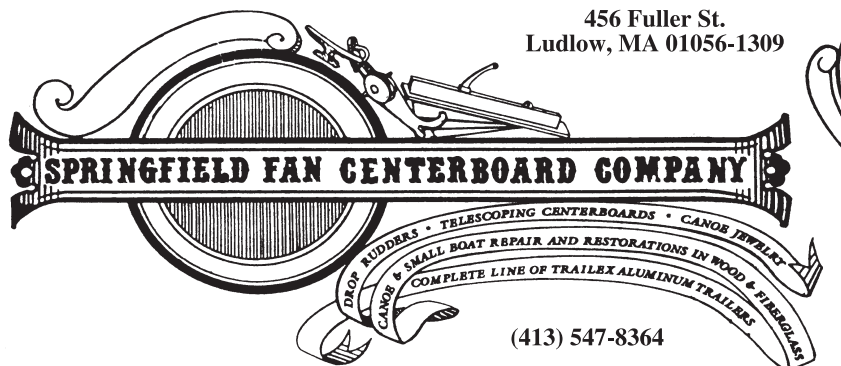
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**Dory Plans**, row, power & sail. 30 designs 8'-30'. Send \$3 for study packet. DOWN EAST DORIES, Dept. MB, Pleasant Beach Rd., S. Thomaston, ME 04858 (TF)



**Alice 12' 10lb Folding Kayak**, \$100 for full-scale plans & instructions. See May '09 article in *MAIB* or send \$5 or e-mail address for color copy of article. C. CORWIN, Box 689, Ketchum, ID 83340, [aliceboat@cox.net](mailto:aliceboat@cox.net) (12)

## SERVICES

**Varnish Spoken Here**, well regarded yacht finisher servicing boat owners from Searsport to Freeport, ME. Fully insured. MARK LITTLE, Damariscotta, ME, (207) 751-9511 (2)

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Jan 13-17 Atlanta Boat Show, Atlanta, GA  
Jan 21-24 Baltimore Boat Show, Balt, MD  
Jan 29-Feb7 Dallas Boat Show, Dallas, TX  
Feb 11-15 Miami Boat Show, Miami, FL

### ROW TEXAS

We have long known that our boats would be popular in Texas....though we didn't quite know *how* popular. In September we did our first Texas show, a small show in Houston. We left home with 14 boats, came home with 3. (We also came home with a different transmission than the one we left home with....but that's another story.)

In January we will be bringing our boats to the Dallas and Houston Boat Shows. Within reason, we are offering free delivery. Order early....remember, we can only carry 14 boats.